

TEKKEN FFXIV

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WHAT SONY DOESN'T
WANT YOU TO KNOW

GOD OF WAR 4 ASCENSION

ISSUE NO 218
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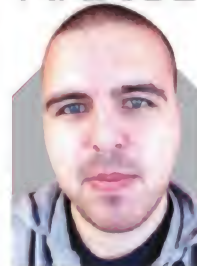
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演劇端末 PlayStation 3 PSN PSVita PSP Welcome **PLAY**

The UK's best independent PlayStation magazine



Kratos is back



Guess who's back? If you haven't guessed

Kratos, then you have incredibly narrow vision to

have skipped the massive biceps and glowing blades on the left of the page. I'm very flattered, of course. My words are important to you! Sniff.

But really, if you haven't charged towards page 6 to get ahead on the latest outing for Kratos, do so now. Not only do we have the first details and screens on the Angriest Man on PlayStation 3's biggest and ballsiest adventure yet, but we've also tracked down and gathered exclusive insight from those responsible for the original *God Of War*. Every thought behind every design decision that helped shape the series is laid bare. We've gone that little bit further for you, just because we can.

There's also our look at *Metal Gear Solid 5* and what to expect, plus PlayStation 4 and 25 future Vita games you must keep your eye on.

We also bring you *Resident Evil 6*, *DmC*, *LittleBigPlanet Karting*, *Lost Planet 3*, *Final Fantasy XIV* and my own personal oooh-I'm-a-bit-tingly-about-this-me game, *Anarchy Reigns*. Not that I'm going to list every single game in the issue here. I'm not a contents page. I'm just a PlayStation 3 fan with a slightly squidgy face honoured to bring you all the biggest PlayStation 3 news that matters. And some of the stuff that doesn't as well. Just in case.

Enjoy the issue.

Rking

Editor

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Every big future Vita title you need



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We often complain about movie games being rushed. Can't say that here.

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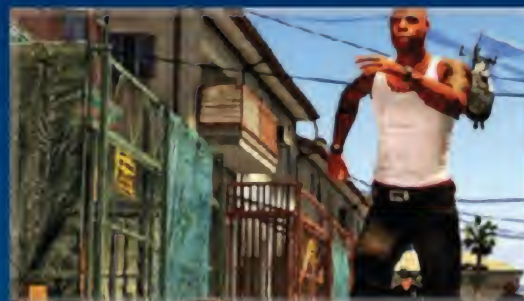
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Was this overlooked for a good reason?



EXCLUSIVE ON YOUR DISC



GTA V HIDDEN SECRETS

The death of Pisswasser and Vespucci Beach, we cover the secrets everyone missed in the Grand Theft Auto V trailer...

MASSIVE TOMB RAIDER LOOK

Twelve minutes. Twelve whole flipping minutes. That's how long our look at Tomb Raider is as we explore Lara Croft's latest.



DRAGON'S DOGMA

We have the full review and a quick Cyclops guide to Capcom's ambitious and sprawling RPG, perfect for watching it in action...

WORST RESIDENT EVIL GAMES EVER

Resident Evil: Operation Raccoon City might be bad but unfortunately, it's not alone as a bad series entry...



SEE THE BACK PAGE FOR MORE!

GOD OF WAR
ASCENSION



ASCEN



GOD OF WAR IV



SOON

GOD OF WAR

GOD OF WAR: ASCENSION.

ONE OF GAMING'S WORST-KEPT SECRETS, SONY HAS FINALLY PULLED THE COVERS OFF THE LATEST KRATOS OUTING AS THE SERIES GOES BACK TO THE ORIGINS OF THE MYSTERIOUS CHARACTER. BUT WHAT WILL IT ACTUALLY BE LIKE? WHAT ABOUT THE GAMEPLAY, THE STORY? PLAY SPEAKS TO EVERYONE FROM DAVID JAFFE TO INDUSTRY INSIDERS TO SEE WHAT'S NEXT FOR PLAYSTATION'S ANGRIEST MAN...

THE EVOLUTION OF KRATOS

He wasn't always Greek and he once had hair. What?

Kratos has always been an unhappy fellow, but surprisingly he's not always been Greek. "We were open to explore many different styles," artist Cecil Kim tells us. "So we dabbled with everything from a fantasy Greek style to even a tribal African style as well. There was myself, [visual development director] Charlie Wen [and a group of us] involved in the first process of designing the 'Hero'. We felt he should be wearing some sort of Greek helmet so I did some variations. At one point I designed him with a white feathery costume and pewter armour, which made him look a little soft and feminine. However, we always portrayed his tormented past sorrow in his facial expression. Basically we were trying to pull out inspirations from every corner of historic fantasy settings and at one point I felt like I was working on several different games."



GOD OF WAR IV IS COMING. EXCEPT THAT IT'S NOT CALLED GOD OF WAR IV, IT'S CALLED GOD OF WAR: ASCENSION AND IT WILL BE a prequel – set before established games in the *God Of War* series.

That may be something of a surprise but the return of Kratos most certainly is not. After all, if the console war is down to a battle of exclusives, then Kratos is one of the soldiers on the frontline for Sony. "God Of War isn't a huge seller, but it's one of [Sony's] better quality exclusives, and sells enough (3-4 million per iteration) to move a few systems," industry analyst Michael Pachter told us.

"The consoles depend upon exclusives to differentiate from one another, and *God Of War* is one of the standout exclusives for PlayStation 3."

It's not hard to see where he gets his confidence from: millions of units sold, multiple awards won, systems sold off the back of the franchise. *God Of War: Ascension* was always going to happen.

Ascension takes place before any other game in the series, so it will explore Kratos leading the armies of Sparta and his relationship with wife Lysandra and daughter Calliope, before he mistakenly kills them while blinded with bloodlust in the original *God Of War* – a key emotional turning point for both game and character. That might do the trick to freshen up this latest entry but will it be enough?

Sony, and its Santa Monica studio that handles development duties on the *God Of War* titles, would certainly say so because a) it's proved it knows what it's doing with all the *God Of War* games developed up to this point and b) listen to what original *God Of War* creator David Jaffe has to say about *God Of War: Ascension*.

"I'm sure the amazing writers of God Of War can figure out a way to incorporate and expand on Kratos's past into future games if they wanted to"

ANDY PARK, concept artist and visual developer on the series

"The teaser was fine but didn't really show anything," he says. "That said, all the teaser needed to do was say, 'Sony Santa Monica is making a new *God Of War* game – enter credit card number here' and it would have been great. And to top it off, one of the nicest, hardest-working and coolest guys in the biz is directing it: my buddy Todd Papy. I have fond memories of he and I and Whitney Wade – who is producing this new *God Of War* – sitting up till all hours placing enemies in Pandora's Temple on the original *God Of War*. Plus, Papy did design on one of *God Of War III*'s best parts: the Escher puzzle."

So he's happy then. There's also going to be something Jaffe never did with the *God Of War* series when he was in charge: multiplayer. It makes sense because multiplayer gives players something new and it also gives the marketing department a fresh bulletpoint to hang its hype from. How fans take to multiplayer won't be

known until they actually play it but regardless – times are changing for Kratos.

What about the story? We've seen Kratos bound and being taunted by the guards of Hades and there are plenty of allusions to the Spartan fighting his way out. The one new touch is that Kratos is seen without his blades, which could point towards a new fighting style or combat overhaul, but otherwise it's a case of so far, so usual. Is this

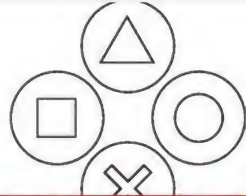
a problem for *God Of War: Ascension*? That the mythology has been explored?

"It is true that although basing a game on Greek mythology provides a great starting point, it can limit where you can go," Andy Park, concept artist and visual developer who worked on the series, tells us. "Again, we can't go so far that it becomes purely a fantasy game, and we can't go so far as to make it a *Lord Of The Rings* franchise. It is fantastical but purely based on the mythology of Greek lore. So keeping it fresh does become a challenge. I think the key was to always find inspiration in its source material."



Ascension will feature buckets of blood. Who knew?

Kratos being punished... but for what, exactly? Hmm.



BOSS BATTLES BROKEN DOWN

DESIGN BATTLES

Impressive as they are, getting Kratos's boss battles in the game was a hard road, according to artist Cecil Kim. "There were always constant battles between directors, producers and whoever built it and put [the boss battles] in the game."

PUSHING BOUNDARIES

"A perfect example [of pushing boundaries] was when I designed Poseidon for *God Of War III*," artist Andy Park tells us. "It was one of those 'can it be done?' moments. But we went for it and I had the pleasure of first imagining it up, and then watching the amazing team at Sony Santa Monica Studios actualise the character. The end result was nothing but amazing."

TINY KRATOS

Topping the previous *God Of War* games is always going to be tough: they get bigger and bigger. Sony Santa Monica had the right idea here with *God Of War III*: look at the size of Kratos. What tricks will it try with *Ascension*, then?

EPIC SCALE

As well as being technically impressive, this shot sums up Santa Monica's incredible imagination. After all, not many game developers would have you fighting Poseidon while climbing Olympus on the arm of Gaia, would they?

● Cerberus will almost certainly feature as a boss.

PARK'S COMMENTS RAISE INTERESTING QUESTIONS ABOUT THE SERIES, AND SEEM TO BE IN STEP WITH SONY'S CHOICE TO GO THE PREQUEL

route. And, what better source material than Kratos's distant past? His time as the God of War and beyond has been extensively documented, but what about his tenure as a Spartan Captain? After all, the tagline for *Ascension* is 'Before he was a god, he was a man'.

"Kratos's past is touched upon to an extent if you go read the comic book series based on the game," says Park. "I was fortunate enough to be able to illustrate the covers to that six-issue mini-series published by DC Comics. As far as the games are concerned, I'm sure the amazing writers of *God Of War* can figure out a way to incorporate and expand on Kratos's past into future games if they wanted to."

It's a tempting idea – just ask Ol' George Lucas – albeit one that would probably be hamstrung by a lack of the more fantastical elements the series is known for. Kratos didn't just come across his incredible fighting powers

by chance: as a born and raised warrior in one of the world's most formidable armies there's plenty of scope to fill in the blanks. We already know about Kratos's battle with Thanatos, when the God of Death abducts Deimos – what about everything past that?

Sony already exploited the prequel aspect with two PSP games – *Chains Of Olympus* and *Ghost Of Sparta* – but it was concerned with what happened after Kratos's transformation into the anger-driven madman.

Before is a different story, however, and it's for that reason that a pure prequel is likely. Sony Santa Monica could also try something new and go for a dual timeline narrative, satisfying both the need to explore Kratos's past while also giving the players the gigantic encounters they need. The *God Of War* series has always been one that ascribes to the 'bigger, better, badass' rule of sequels. Will going back in the timeline to when Kratos was *less* powerful make sense to players? No, probably not. Would incorporating elements of his back story help flesh out Kratos's >



● Could Kratos be ready to make way for Deimos?

> character, nicely contrasting his past and current lives? Yes. As long as you expect to be smashing multi-storey bosses to pieces as you do it.

"Since the first game, large-scale boss fights became our main focus," Cecil Kim, an artist who worked on the series (including *GOW III*), tells us. "It became our mission statement. We were committed to deliver better, bigger experiences every time we introduced new boss creatures."

Which is understandable – you want to up the ante with each instalment. But it brings us back, again, to the question of just who Kratos is going to fight. As you can see in our infographic below, he's gone on a bit of a rampage across the games. There's plenty of minor gods left to take on, but whether or not they really fit the bill is up for debate.

When asked about the problem of keeping things fresh, Kim's answer was intriguing: "Well, if you see the franchise is all about Kratos, yes..." Kim wouldn't be drawn on what the Santa Monica team

CHOOSE YOUR DESTINY

CHARTING KRATOS'S RAMPAGES

KRATOS

Hemlock to his his family in *God Of War*. In many ways, he is the most brutal of them. Will Kratos be his own worst enemy?

APOLLO

Not Apollo Creed. Apollo's bow appears in *God Of War III* and he's mentioned in the comics but yet to appear in any *God Of War* game. Is this his time?

ARES

The game's final boss. Ares is the God of War and responsible for making Kratos kill his own family. Kratos responds by impaling Ares with the Blade of the Gods, causing him to explode.

MEDUSA

Kratos lights the snake-haired Gorgon, ripping off her head in the process. He then uses it against his enemies. You know this if you've got the PAL version; it's depicted on the box.

PERSEPHONE

Backed up by Atlas, the Queen of the Underworld is killed by Kratos using the Gauntlet of Zeus.

CHARON

The Underworld's ferryman. Charon encounters Kratos twice, eventually being cut in two and smashed repeatedly in the face.

MEDUSA

She shows up in *God Of War* but she's almost certainly going to show up in *Ascension* as well, if the snakes in the teaser trailer are anything to go by.

CEBERUS

The three-headed dog pops up in gaming every so often (*Final Fantasy VIII*, *Devil May Cry 3*) and it looks like the creature will finally make its long-awaited *God Of War* debut in *Ascension*.

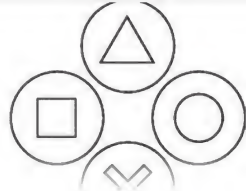
SPARTA'S ENEMIES

As captain of Sparta's army, we could see mortal battles between Kratos and the enemies of Sparta.

God Of War: Ascension
PS3

God Of War: Chains Of Olympus
2008 PSP

God Of War
2005 PS2



could possibly be working on for the next instalment, issuing a flat 'no comment' when asked about what Kratos could be up to in the future. But his comments about limiting the franchise to Kratos are intriguing, especially when there appears to be a ready-made replacement for the baldy madman – yup, it's that guy Deimos again.

FOR THOSE UNFAMILIAR WITH THE CHARACTER, DEMOS IS KRATOS'S BROTHER, CARTED OFF BY THANATOS TO THE UNDERWORLD

thanks to his strange birthmarks. Said markings tallied with a prophecy that the gods would fall at the hands of a marked warrior, and so off he went. Obviously that warrior turns out to be Kratos, who has his brother's markings tattooed on himself as a tribute, but Deimos's story is one that has been teased and expanded upon as the series has progressed. Again there'd be issues with repetition and going back in time (he 'dies' in *Ghost Of Sparta*, but his voice is heard in *III*), and



Kratos seems to be the main character again, going by released media. That said, for the sake of freshening up the series we wouldn't be surprised if *God Of War: Ascension* features Deimos in a prominent role.

Nor would we be surprised if there wasn't a version of *God Of War* headed to the Vita in the near future. As mentioned earlier Sony is keen to expand its IP across its platforms, and given the power of the system the company would surely be mad not to.

"I'm sure that they will exploit any owned intellectual property to move Vita hardware, so am equally certain we will see a *God Of War* instalment for Vita," analyst Michael Pachter tells us.

"The first [game] will likely be a port. Depending upon the success of Vita hardware, they may consider an original title for the handheld."

Back to *Ascension*, however, it's worth noting there are intriguing clues on what to expect. Not necessarily in the teaser trailer – Cerberus and Medusa will almost

certainly feature as bosses – but rather, consider that Santa Monica was looking for staff with open-world experience last year. Open-world *God Of War*? Or at least a hub structure? It'll be interesting to see how open-world elements will be woven into *God Of War*'s tight action fabric.

Also consider how David Jaffe's proposed scenario for *God Of War III* is still left open to be picked at. His vision saw Greek mythology clashing with Norse and Egyptian to determine who would reign supreme, with Kratos's equivalents joining forces with him to defeat their own gods.

That gives Sony Santa Monica something to work with and introduces new environments, weapons and characters. Will any of this make the cut for *Ascension*, given its apparent prequel setting? A clash of the gods, open-world elements and multiplayer. How these different elements come together remains to be seen but one thing is certain – Kratos will be smashing skulls for a long time to come. ➤

“I'm certain we will see a God Of War instalment for Vita”

MICHAEL PACTER, industry analyst

ZEUS

The final boss, Kratos nearly kills the ruler of Olympus, only to be thwarted when he accidentally runs Zeus's daughter, Athena, through instead. Zeus escapes, but they of course meet again.

HERMES

After taunting Kratos with his speed, he's finally pinned down and has both of his legs cut off. Kratos then takes his boots, the source of his speed.

ZEUS (AGAIN)

The final battle, Kratos impales Zeus with the Blade of Olympus before fighting his spirit form and finally beating him to death with his bare hands.

HERCULES

The Greek champion is killed after Kratos traps him under a raised platform and repeatedly punches him in the face while wearing the Nemean Colossus gauntlets.

PERSEUS

The mythological hero encounters Kratos as he tries to change his past. After engaging in battle, Perseus is killed after Kratos impales him on a talon.

THANATOS

The God of Death, Kratos kills him by ripping open his cracked chest and stabbing him.

DEIMOS

Kratos's brother was driven mad by his time spent as a prisoner of Thanatos, planning Kratos's death, but Kratos makes peace with Deimos and they team up to take on their common enemy.

CERYX

This mobile game saw Kratos killing Ceryx, a messenger of the gods and the son of Hermes.

COLOSSUS OF RHODES

One of PS2's most jaw-dropping moments, this gigantic boss is dispatched at the very start of the game.

POSEIDON

The God of the Sea is killed when Kratos removes his human form from his aquatic shield, then pushes his thumbs through his eyes.

PANDORA'S GUARDIAN

A massive minotaur, the Guardian towers over Kratos yet still meets the same fate as all of the Spartan foes he's killed, impaled against a door.

PIRAEUS LION

A giant Spartan lion Kratos kills before moving on to the Dissenter boys in Ares, who set it on Kratos after he had accidentally set it free.

God Of War: Ghost Of Sparta
2010 PSP

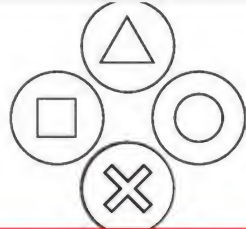
God Of War: Betrayal
2007 Mobile

God Of War II
2007 PS2

God Of War III
2010 PS3

“ We were open to explore many different styles. So we dabbled with everything from a fantasy Greek style to even a tribal African style ”

««L. KIM, artist on the series



10 THINGS WE WANT TO SEE FROM GOD OF WAR ASCENSION™

From proper 3D to Move support (Move controllers on chains!), this is what Ascension needs to stay fresh and modern



1 New Central Character

While it's often remembered for what it did wrong, it's worth remembering what *Metal Gear Solid 2: Sons Of Liberty* did right when players took control of floppy-haired Raiden. We could see main character Snake through fresh eyes and get a new perspective on him. What if the same thing happened here?



2 A Change Of Scenery

When the original *God Of War* launched there was no doubting the appeal of the Greek setting: in fact, the mythology carried the series through five games. That said it's getting a little tired. There are Gods of War in other cultures: maybe it's time we played as them as well?



3 A More Technical Combat Engine

It would be totally optional of course – *God Of War* is more about button-mashing over technique – but for those of us that have a bit more skill or experience with the series it would be a nice addition. As would...



4 An Ultra-Hard Difficulty Setting

The previous games had Titan and Chaos modes, which was difficult, but we're talking one-life-and-you're-dead difficulty. Like *MGS 2*'s European Extreme or *DMC 3*'s Dante Must Die. It would be a badge of honour, an elusive Trophy and the source of many broken controllers.



5 Branching Paths

Don't worry, we're not saying that we want the series to turn into an RPG. That said we'd love a bit of choice in who we align with and who we kill. Perhaps aligning with different factions could yield different perks/limitations, as well as unlocking certain areas?

6 Proper 3D Support

Has there ever been a series more deserving of a proper 3D conversion? No. Just imagine the last game but with blood and gore and tits (ahem) flying out of the screen towards you and you're pretty much there. Guaranteed to push some of Sony's 3DTVs, that's for sure.



7 No More QTEs

Look, we love QTEs as much as the next man, which is to mean that we generally hate them but tolerate them in games where they're good. *God Of War* has been fairly strong in this regard, but come on: they've had their time. Bring in new mechanics.



8 Bigger Monsters

Because that's what *God Of War* is all about. We're not sure how part IV would top the last game, but then we said that about *God Of War II* to III and were well-rewarded anyway. The opening boss fight is one of the trademarks of the series: we can't see Sony getting this wrong.



9 Move Support

Chuckle all you want, but who wouldn't want to charge around their front rooms, flinging fake Chains of Olympus around and nearly smashing your television to pieces? Exactly. Think of the marketing potential and then try to tell us that Sony won't do it.



10 Remote Play Support For Vita

We know that it's difficult to get this working properly, and there are some that will balk at the scale of *GOW* being pushed to a smaller screen, but this is the future now, and this sort of thing should come as standard. ☒



Install

Where fact + opinion ÷ PlayStation = the truth

Need To Know



Resi 6 preorder bonus
You know from our preview that Mercenaries is back in *Resident Evil 6* (unless you read the mag in order) but you won't know about extra maps as preorder bonuses, namely Rail Yard from Best Buy, Catacombs from GameStop and High Sea Fortress from Amazon. No word on similar UK deals.

PS4 REVEALED?

Sources point to it being codenamed Orbis; out before Christmas 2013

It begins. Sources have leaked to the gaming press that PS4 is in development, and that top publishing houses have already been briefed on the system.

Rumours suggest the machine is called 'Orbis', although it's unclear whether this is just a codename. Intriguingly, the site points out that the web address orbis.scedev.net leads to an active (placeholder) page, much the same as vita.scedev.net. Replacing 'Vita' with its codename NGP also leads to an official page, lending a small amount of credibility to the rumour.

Shocking as it may be, the name isn't anywhere near the most surprising news to come from the source, who was speaking to Kotaku. As well as allegedly having no backwards compatibility with PS3 games, Orbis is also rumoured to feature a system to prevent preowned games from running correctly.

Every game (Blu-ray or digital: the source also suggests every Orbis game will be available as a digital download) played on Orbis will be linked to a single PSN account. Attempting to play this same disc elsewhere could result in the content being locked into something akin to a 'trial' mode until a fee is stumped up to unlock the whole shebang. Obviously, digital downloads would easily be locked to a single PSN account anyway.



● Xbox 360's early release meant it had *Call Of Duty 2*, while PS3 didn't.



PlayStation4

“The anti-preowned stuff is nonsense, and Sony would be barmy to even consider it”



FUS-RO-DAH now trademarked

It's become *Skyrim*'s most famous meme that doesn't involve knees and arrows and now it has been trademarked across a series of merchandise options. What does this mean? T-shirts bearing the dragon shout are on the way. FUS-RO-DAH.



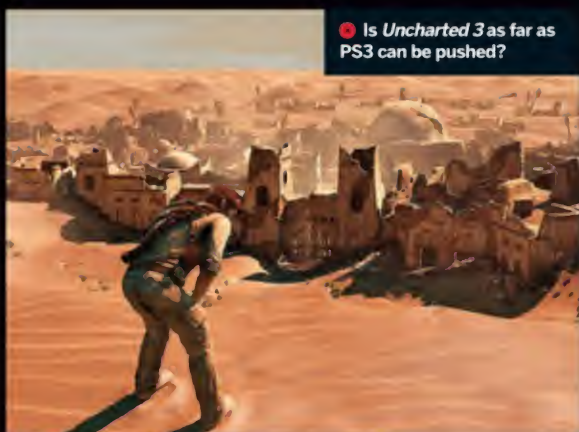
Demon's Souls servers being switched off

Atlus, publisher of *Demon's Souls* in the US, will be pulling the plug on the American servers come the end of May. No word yet if the European version will also shut down but either way, it won't run too much longer. Make the most of the online component while you can!



AMY gets patched up

It was slaughtered upon release for clunky controls, awkward voice-acting and being too difficult. One of those problems has now been fixed as Lexis Numerique has smoothed out the difficulty spikes, allowing you to keep syringes and saving at each checkpoint. Still, those controls...ouch.



Is *Uncharted 3* as far as PS3 can be pushed?

In all honesty, this measure sounds ridiculous and if it happens we'll eat our entire collection of PS3 games. Industry analyst Michael Pachter has already dismissed it, stating that potential industry problems would prevent Sony from going forward with it.

"If Sony unilaterally did this, I could see GameStop refusing to carry their console, and sales of the PS4 would thereby suffer," he said. Pachter was also dismissive of the entire rumour as a whole, but Kotaku wasn't the only one who received tips regarding the PlayStation 3's successor. Games blog VG247 also spoke to a source that claimed Sony had allegedly informed "top line" publishers of the existence and specs of its machine, and is confident of beating Microsoft to market, stating that, "Sony [is] completely in the belief that they have the jump on Microsoft this time."

Specs-wise, Kotaku's source claims that the machine will use an AMD x64 CPU, as well as a 'Southern Islands' GPU, also by AMD. This tech is apparently capable of resolutions of 4,096 x 2,160, with 3D outputting at 1080p as opposed to PS3's 720p.

A final rumour is that Sony is to abandon the Cell processor. Which makes sense, but we're sad that the nutters who insisted it would take over the world and enslave us with its power won't have anything to bang on about now.

As for the rest of the rumours, we're on the fence. Some sound genuine, such as the tech, and even the name has something to it thanks to that dev site link. But the anti-preowned stuff is nonsense, and Sony would be barmy to even consider it. If Sony locked out second-hand games, all Microsoft would have to do is allow them on its console for a huge PR victory.

The loss of backwards compatibility will be a blow, particularly in the early days when new software is thin on the ground. That said, hopefully the PS4 will have a far easier programming architecture for developers to work with. The Cell was notoriously difficult, so with AMD tech allegedly powering both Sony and Microsoft's next-gen consoles we hope to see an ease of development in this coming generation.

TOP FIVE GAMES WE WANT TO SEE ON PLAYSTATION 4



1 METAL GEAR SOLID 5

With *Revengeance* now being looked after by the capable hands of Platinum Games, Hideo Kojima's currently cooking up his trademark mental ideas, the new FOX engine is in place, and no PlayStation is complete without a *Metal Gear Solid* title. It's happening. The only questions here are when it'll happen and how utterly bonkers it's going to be.



2 JAK AND DAXTER

Sounds crazy, yes, but imagine *Jak's* vibrant worlds rendered in 2,160 res. The sales of *Jak And Daxter* lagged some way behind Naughty Dog's other titles – the entire series just about sold more than the original *Crash Bandicoot* – but now Naughty Dog is split into two development teams, this could happen. Base it on the early games, mind.



3 DARK SOULS SEQUEL

The opposite of *Jak*, we'd love to see the worlds From Software could build with PlayStation 4. There was a bleak, morbid beauty to *Dark Souls*, which has one of the most impressive worlds we've seen, plus it could make good use of online innovations that Sony pushes with its new console. It'd still make us cry tears of blood with frustration, though.



4 SAINTS ROW 4

The last game was one of PS3's true gems. With the grunt of PlayStation 4 behind it, can you imagine what nonsense Volition is going to come up with? Danny Bilson has already confirmed a *Saints Row 4* is on the way so given the time frame for development, this should hit around the same time as PlayStation 4. Could be huge, in every sense of the word.



5 NEW BATMAN

Yeah, it's not actually called that. Well... it hasn't been ruled out yet. Could you imagine if it was called 'New Batman'? Regardless, imagine *Batman: Arkham City* with a bajillion times the power and graphical grunt at its disposal. Maybe with a stronger focus on a few villains and an even bigger city to swoop over. Yeah. That's what we thought.

INSTALL

The Best DLC On The Horizon



MASS EFFECT 3

We're happy with three colour variations when eating Neopolitan ice-cream but not so much when playing BioWare RPGs. The internet agreed with sheer FURY at the ending. The free DLC 'expanding' the finale is due this summer.



BATTLEFIELD 3

The Close Quarters DLC in "June" will feature four close-quarters (obviously) maps and ten new weapons. And we've put "June" in speech-marks because that's what EA said, not because we doubt June is an actual month.



NINJA GAIDEN 3

There's been a barrage of DLC for *Ninja Gaiden 3* since its release, with extra weapons and levels being released. Ultimate Ninja Pack is free until the end of May and more weapons are likely on the way via future DLC.



ELDER SCROLLS V: SKYRIM

Bethesda has already said it will pursue the *Shivering Isles* model of huge DLC episodes rather than smaller episodes as we saw in *Fallout 3*. They're timed exclusives for Xbox 360 (boo!) but should be worth the wait.



DRAGON'S DOGMA

Given the game (side-quests, lots of characters) and the publisher (squeezing the DLC cash cow until the pips squeak), we expect to see side-quest and extra character DLC and Capcom squeeze the DLC cash cow until the pips squeak.

ALSO COMING

Street Fighter X Tekken costumes, *SSX* courses (and possibly characters), *Ridge Racer Unbounded* cars and paintjobs, *SoulCalibur V* costumes.



THE NEXT SKYRIM

Bored of Skyrim? Of course not, but after months of traipsing around Tamriel you'd be forgiven for wondering what else is coming out to sate your fantasy needs. Here are four upcoming games that could do just that...

GAME OF THRONES

PUBLISHER: Focus Home

Interactive

RELEASE DATE: TBC 2012

This will be the next Skyrim because it's Game Of Thrones

With one of the world's most prominent licences behind it you'd expect this to make a splash. The devs behind it aren't exactly in Bethesda's league but this will still have enough class to make it a minor hit. Maybe.

OF ORCS AND MEN

PUBLISHER: Focus Home

Interactive

RELEASE DATE: Spring 2012

This will be the next Skyrim because the title reminds us of reading a book in school

Sadly not an adaptation of *Of Mice And Men*, but wait! There's a twist: this time you play as the Orcs and Goblins against the evil human scum keeping you down. Which is cool: let's hope the dev knows what to do with the idea.

THE DARK EYE: DEMONICON

PUBLISHER: Kalypso

RELEASE DATE: TBC 2012

This will be the next Skyrim because it's based on an actual role-playing game

Yes, if there's anything that can guarantee big sales – in the German market, probably – of an RPG it's having the licence to a hit board game. *The Dark Eye* is that licence, *Demonicon* has it, and this action-RPG is probably going to sell well.

DARKSIDERS II

PUBLISHER: THQ

RELEASE DATE: June

This will be the next Skyrim because you play as Death

On the surface *Darksiders II* may not seem anything like *Skyrim*, and in terms of choice it's not going to get anywhere near it. But if you're looking for an action-RPG with an interesting backdrop and a story to get your teeth/claws/blade into then this might just fit the bill.

FIVE THINGS YOU HAVEN'T DONE IN SKYRIM YET



1 RETURNED IT

Let's face it: you wasted a long time waiting for this game, looking at screenshots, being naive and acting all surprised when it came out broken like most Bethesda games. Now, you're essentially married to it. You love it.



2 COMPLETED IT

Well, you may have completed it in the sense that you finished the story or got a 100% completion rating. But whatever. There are still plenty of sidequests to do and lots of stories to be told in that world. Get back to it man.



3 KILLED GRAYBEARDS

First: no you haven't. You might tell your friends you have. You may once have dreamt you have and then did that thing where you're not sure what is fantasy and reality. But trust us: you haven't done this.



4 FOUGHT A DRAGON USING THE WABBAJACK

Although you really should, as it's quite useful against them. That said you probably bottled it and insisted on using other weapons, then got stomped. Try the Wabba. It'll change your life.



5 NOT SEEN A BUG

Some of them are hilarious (horses walking up sheer mountains), others game-breaking (er, the PS3 version). Either way it's impossible not to have seen a bug in *Skyrim*: in fact, you've probably seen about 10,000.

THE REAL-LIFE LOLLIPOP CHAINSAW

Jessica Nigri is cheerleader Juliet Starling

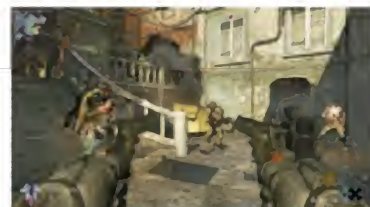


Blonde pigtails. San Romero Knights top. Rah-rah skirt. Bloodied chainsaw. It turns out that **Play** isn't the only one who can pull off that soon-to-be iconic look when Saturday nights go a bit wrong. So can Jessica Nigri, winner of Warner Bros.' contest in the US to find a lookalike for Juliet Starling, star of *Lollipop Chainsaw*.

Lollipop Chainsaw is the action game by Grasshopper Manufacture, whose only PlayStation 3 game to date is *Shadows Of The Damned*. You know, one about shooting demons with your big boner. And a bridge between realms that was the body of a giant naked lady you walked across. And the special edition of *Lollipop Chainsaw* in Japan has the Border Bikini costume. Spot a theme emerging? We wanted to end this with an innuendo that rhymes with Grasshopper but the only one we could think of was Asshopper and 'Grasshopper? Asshopper more like!' doesn't really work. But pretend it did anyway and we can all move on to the boxout below.



BLACK OPS 2 MULTIPLAYER BIG CHANGES INBOUND



Call Of Duty online could be about to undergo a dramatic revamp. David Vonderhaar, game design director at Treyarch, could shove multiplayer into a direction that encourages teamplay. "If you only or mostly play TDM or a TDM variant (hardcore, elimination, Kill Confirmed, whatever) why is that?" he recently asked his followers on Twitter. Team Deathmatch is by far the most popular mode in *Call Of Duty*.

Call Of Duty is often referred to as the 'every man for himself' FPS, with *Battlefield* able to steal some players away thanks to its reputation as the team shooter. How could *Call Of Duty* encourage more teamplay? Is it even possible for an arcade-style shooter to stop everyone ignoring teamwork? Let us know what you think...

WHAT MIGHT CHANGE

1 HIGHER POINTS FOR ASSISTS

What if players got just as many, or even more, points for assists than kills? Players would stick together.

2 BRAND-NEW TEAM KILLSTREAKS

Rumoured for *MW3*. It doesn't actively encourage a new playing style, though, which is a problem.

3 SLOWER SPEED

A slower affair means less dependence on reactions and twitch shooting, which makes teamplay more viable.

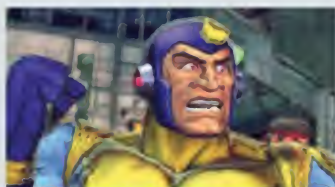
4 NEW MODES

Kill Confirmed was a good attempt at solving camping, so new modes that specifically encourage teamplay above all else should work.

5 NOTHING AT ALL

If the same engine is used (likely) and Activision wants to keep the status quo (likely), we'll probably get a tweaked take on *Black Ops* MP.

CHARACTERS NO ONE SHOULD COSPLAY AS



MEGA MAN STREET FIGHTER X TEKKEN

Thanks to Capcom, it's now impossible to cosplay as Mega Man without looking at least a *little bit* like Fat Pervy And Probably Slightly Sweaty Mega Man who graced *Street Fighter X Tekken*. It's the perfect anti-cosplay measure.



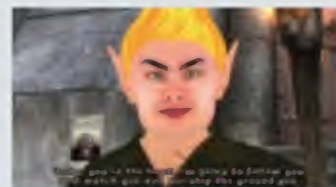
DICK MARCINKO ROGUE WARRIOR

Unless you're prepared to growl with such machismo it sounds like you're gurgling blood and grow a beard so manly you could use it to shave a brick into a throat-slitting knife, you're not ready to be Dick Marcinko.



BOY NOBY NOBY BOY

Boy is feasible if you were born without any bones but those people are presumably busy with their FBI deployment as they're dropped down the drainpipe of Doctor X's mansion to gain access for the fire-squad team.



ADORING FAN ELDER SCROLLS IV: OBLIVION

No one will be able to capture the look. The face that looks like a potato with facial features punched in. The hair straight from the Troll doll factory line. The lack of tongue yet the ability to speak. Go on. Try it.



ETHAN HEAVY RAIN

Dress like a Coldplay fan and you've got the look already, true. But unless you're going to expo halls shouting "Jason! Jason! Jason! Jason! Jason!" Ten minutes after a small boy wandered past on his own, you're doing it wrong.

YOUR SHOUT

Play readers have their say

ASSASSIN'S CREED 3

f facebook
facebook.com/PlayMagUK

LAURA RICH
Want!

CONOR GARRATT

I am looking forward to it. There's not really much more to say, since I'm trying to leave a lot of it as a surprise for when I first play it.

TYLER EIGHTHENE

Gotta admit bit of a stretch when you think bout it cause the end of *Revelations* left more questions than it answered.

CHARLIE DAVIS

I hope that they make some serious changes with *Assassin's Creed III*. Not that the last couple are bad or anything but it's wearing a little thin.

SANDY WALLER

First one I've been genuinely excited about since *II*.

CARLY JONES

I can't wait to get my mitts on it/him!

Play Online

If you want to follow the latest gaming news with the laziest gaming crew, check us out at [Facebook.com/PlayMagazineUK](https://www.facebook.com/PlayMagazineUK), twitter.com/PlayMag_UK and [Youtube.com/PlayMagUK](https://www.youtube.com/PlayMagUK)

YouTube
youtube.com/PlayMagUK

Game of the year 2012! I'm 100% sure.

DIMIP97

Please have good on-foot chases through the forests!

JACKTHESMACK

Uhh, two things. 1. This just looks like the complete black sheep of the series and I really don't think this was the right way to take the story but whatever. 2. Why couldn't Desmond be the

assassin you play as this game... this game just feels uninspired let's just hope that they do a better job story wise than *Revelations*.

MYSTERYMANPETER

Honestly, I kinda called this years ago that they would do a game over the American Revolution cause they have done so much Rome and Italian history I knew they would do some American.
PYROEST1996

twitter
twitter.com/PlayMag_UK

@HARESANDHALLOWS

I'm so excited for *Assassin's Creed III*, I can't wait to be able to climb trees and adapt to the new style of fighting.

@PROTAG22

I am a bit disappointed that Conroy or whatever he's called isn't Welsh. Could have had assassins running amok in the Rhondda Valleys.

@ABBLUEFLYINGCAR

F***ING AWESOME.

@FLYKROW

It's *Metal Gear Solid 3*... pretty much... kinda... no no it is... definitely.

@XPERIAHUSKY

After playing the first *Assassin's Creed*, left a bad taste in a mouth and haven't wanted to play the rest of the series.

@CHRISSMITHSTER

More Desmond than ever before has me worried. I want less Desmond.

INSTANT EXPERT

DRAGON AGE 3

What to expect from the third in BioWare's ye olde RPG series

MIX AND MATCH

The second game was a departure from the first which irked some, so BioWare is going to lengths to make sure we're all catered for in the third game. Not only will we see a mix of *Dragon Age: Origins* and *Dragon Age II*, but there's going to be a hint of *Skyrim* for good measure.

STORY BOREY?

Obviously story elements are few and far between – and even when we know them we're not going to ruin it for you – but the basic overview has been revealed. The world of Ferelden is at war, mages vs templars, and the player travels as far as Orlais and Tevinter to calm hostilities. Nice.

NEW FACES, NEW NAMES

Just as the second game dropped the Warden in favour of Hawke, *Dragon Age III* will opt for another completely new character. This doesn't mean nothing from your old saves will carry over, just that you're not doing a *Mass Effect*-style mass import of data and decisions. Which we're fine with.

END IS FOREVER

It's fair to wonder openly what direction BioWare will take with *DAIII*'s ending. If the studio already has a full story and conclusion worked out, will it have changed in the wake of the *Mass Effect 3* ending controversy? We'd hope the studio wouldn't be so fickle, but there's always the chance.

TWIT

The power of social media can be a wonderful thing, especially when it leads to what is basically an accidental announcement of an upcoming sequel. Just that happened with *DAIII*, as creative lead Alistair McNally called for new artists to apply to BioWare in order to work on *#DragonAge3*. Subtle.

CAST SPELL: FROSTBITE

The engine backing up *Dragon Age III* is said to be EA's choice de rigueur: Frostbite 2. This means the game will almost definitely look the part, but it also means we might be seeing more destructibility in and around the game. A fight with a dragon resulting in a levelled village? Yes, please.

INPUT BIN-PUT

We're a bit wary about this one: BioWare has asked fans online to give their input into what they want to see in *DAIII*. True, there's nothing wrong with asking – in fact, it's entirely the right thing to do. But we know what damage listening too much can do, so we're reserving judgement for now.

MPDA

As we saw with *Mass Effect 3*, BioWare wants to whack multiplayer into things that seemingly don't suit it and at the same time make it actually fun to play. So it's of little surprise to find out there are plans in motion to bring online play to *DAIII*, with the possibility of a bit of co-op, too.

WHY YOU SHOULD CARE ABOUT

XCOM: Enemy Unknown

We're well aware it isn't the sort of game that will appeal to a fair few gamers, but *XCOM: Enemy Unknown* has the potential to change how you think about gaming. Really, it does.



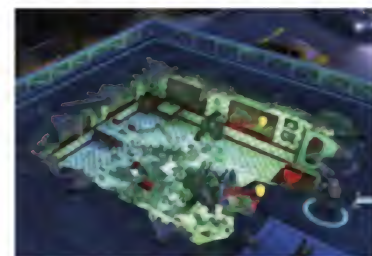
1. It knows you're smart

You're not dumb, but games seem to think you are. So what about a game where you're encouraged to think about your actions? Sounds heavenly to us.



2. There are real consequences

And after you've thought about your actions, what about a game where you're rewarded – or punished – accordingly? No trying again. Live with what you did.



3. Suffocating atmosphere

And while you're being forced to think and live with your actions, you're scared half-witless as a result of the ever-foreboding atmosphere that pervades. Terror: it's great.



4. Huge change of pace

Instant thrills are fine – they have their place. But the slow burner is the real thrill. Seeing your plan come to fruition over dozens of turns. Taking back the world over dozens of hours. Bliss.

So long as all goes well – and it looks to be going pretty well – this could be the game that opens you, your friends or anyone else up to the world of glorious, wonderful strategy. We're not even kidding: it's a genre that can take over lives. That's why *XCOM: Enemy Unknown* is truly worth caring about.

INSTALL

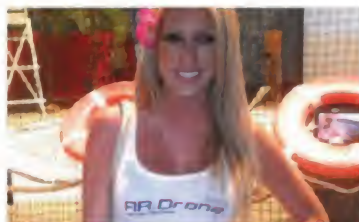
GUIDE TO E3 BOOTH BABES

E3 is a month away, so Marketing Men are poring over LA's, ahem, talent as you read this. Here's what to expect!



THE OBVIOUS

Available now! Because the game is available now. See? Perfect innuendo! Sigh. Someone was paid a lot of money to come up with that. Imagine the smug pen-twirling, chair-swivelling, air-punching self-satisfaction after they did so.



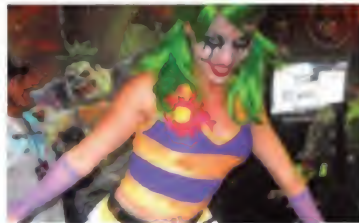
THE UNLOVED

It's E3 tradition that some stands just won't be visited. Last year's 'toy helicopter in a net' special is a perfect example. The quiet, lonely stand was seemingly manned by a lost tourist who wandered in from the hotel across the road.



THE COLLECTIVE

They roam in packs. By 'roam' we mean walk-five-feet-before-group-of-sweaty-photographers-intervene. No one even knows what game they're promoting. It's a mess of ambiguous costumes, flash photography and awkwardness. Hurray!



THE COSPLAY

Perhaps the one acceptable form of booth babe, until you realise every female character ever has been designed to wear three strips of fabric at most. Harley Quinn is a really (really) rare exception.



THE REALLY OBVIOUS

Yes, those are girls in hotpants and yes, there was a free carwash outside of E3 where these girls did a not particularly great job of washing cars. How many extra *Saints Row: The Third* pre-orders came out of this? Two? 20? 8,903?



FINAL FANTASY XIV

WE SHOULD BE playing it right now. In fact, we should have been playing this since March last year, the original release date for Square Enix's ambitious MMORPG *Final Fantasy XIV*. The problem? The PC version preceded it by six months and was thoroughly awful, trotting onto shelves with scores around the 40% mark and huge bruises thanks to the critical battering fans and media had left. Square Enix realised it would take more than six months and a few plasters to fix everything in time for March 2011, so the PlayStation 3 version was shoved aside as the studio set about fixing the PC version.

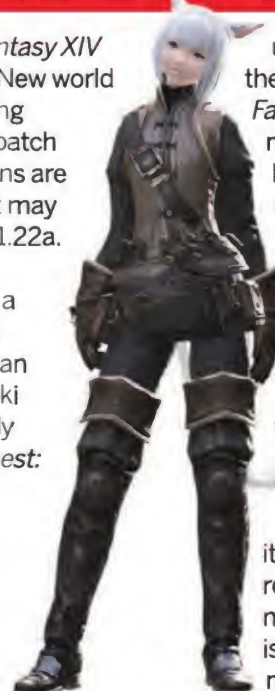
This is where *Final Fantasy XIV* is at now. The end goal is for Square Enix to bring the game up to patch 2.0, when it will be relaunched on PC and released

on PlayStation 3. *Final Fantasy XIV* is currently at patch 1.21. New world quests and materia crafting recipes are promised for patch 1.21. Job-exclusive weapons are also being considered but may be pushed back to patch 1.22a. Progress is slow.

As part of the changes, a new director was brought in to look after the 250-man development team – Naoki Yoshida. He was previously the director of *Dragon Quest: Monster Battle Road*, a Japanese arcade game, which makes him an odd choice for the role. Still, one change he's brought in is regular Letters From The Producer, regularly

updating fans on progress of the team's work towards *Final Fantasy XIV* 2.0. Worryingly, his most recent mention of the PlayStation 3 version was October last year.

So what now for *Final Fantasy XIV* on PlayStation 3? The next sign of life will likely come between October and December of this year, when the servers will be shut down and a closed beta will begin life. That will be around the same time as Tokyo Games Show, so it's the ideal showcase for the rebirth of *Final Fantasy XIV*, as most of the current player base is Japanese. There's nothing more we can do now but wait...



2012 - WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE NOW

This is how *Final Fantasy XIV* looks for PC players. Grey. Messy. Dull. Bleurgh. It's typical of a PC MMORPG. It has MMO clutter, drab textures and lighting so low-rent and ghetto it would bring eternal shame to a backyard barbeque.

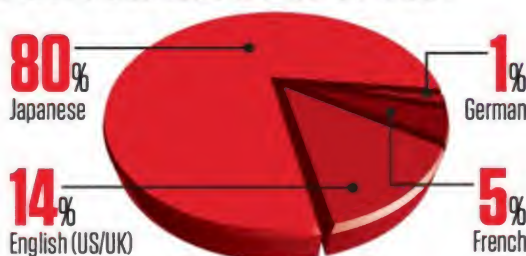


2013 - WHAT IT WILL LOOK LIKE ON PS3

This is a concept screen for how *FFXIV* will eventually look. We approve of the Colourful Swirly Colours™. Remember, though, it's a concept image. You could make a picture with potato prints and that would be just as accurate.

DOES ANYONE OUTSIDE JAPAN CARE?

These are stats showing the nationality of players taken from the most populated PC server in late January this year, indicating perhaps the PS3 launch is needed to boost Western *FFXIV* numbers:



THE GREAT RELEASE DATE FACE-OFF

There's a lot of good stuff coming out later this year, but which game is going to come out on top in its respective release window? One thing for it: FACE-OFF

FAR CRY 3 VS BORDERLANDS 2

EARLY SEPTEMBER

SERIES SALES

4 MILLION+

The earliest of the huge releases this year, *Far Cry 3* will have the market to itself for a brief period before the Gearbox gun-'em-up enters the fray. The first game was PC-only (ignoring the awful console versions) and the second one divisive – we can't see *Far Cry 3* toppling the gun-heavy might of the fan-favourite sequel it's up against.



MID-SEPTEMBER

SERIES SALES

4.5 MILLION+

Famously "sent out to die" last time around, the evidence is there for the sequel that *Borderlands* is a popular one with millions of gamers. The second game looks likely to bring back all that made the first so good – with the obvious added extras – and it's coming out around the right time to be successful over its jungle-roaming competition.

WINNER: BORDERLANDS 2 Public reticence will hover around *Far Cry 3*, and the lure of loads of guns will see *Borderlands 2* nab this one.

BIOSHOCK INFINITE VS RESIDENT EVIL 6

MID-OCTOBER

SERIES SALES

9 MILLION+

Nothing's ever nailed-on, but there's every chance *BioShock: Infinite* will be an excellent game. That said, it's going head-to-head with a seriously anticipated sequel to a legendary series. As such, all the quality and good ideas in the world are unlikely to help *Infinite* grab anything other than a respectable second place against the zombie invasion.



EARLY OCTOBER

SERIES SALES

47 MILLION+

The heritage, the love, the fact that this looks like it will be a ten-billion dollar production (or thereabouts): there's little to make us think that Capcom's *Resident Evil 6* will be anything other than a massive success. Even facing off against the might of Irrational Games, it's the Japanese that are surely going to take this victory.

WINNER: RESIDENT EVIL 6 *BioShock: Infinite* will likely be exceptional, but it can't stand in the way of a gaming juggernaut like *Resident Evil 6*.

MOH: WARFIGHTER VS COD: BLACK OPS 2

LATE OCTOBER

SERIES SALES

34 MILLION+

Some wonder why this sequel is even being made, while others stamp their feet petulantly and curtly remind the world that the original was actually pretty good. Still, while it might chip away at *COD*'s overall sales, *Warfighter* has little to no chance of dethroning the Activision juggernaut. It might still one-up the competition when it comes to beards, though.



EARLY NOVEMBER

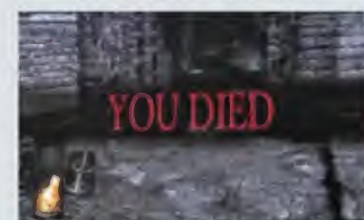
SERIES SALES

130 MILLION+

Is there even any point in wondering? Well, yes. *Call of Duty* is still the all-encompassing behemoth of sales and fury it has been for the last however long. But something is changing. Gamers are getting antsy. The seeds of dissent have been sown. Will this make *Black Ops 2* a failure against EA's latest manshooter? Absolutely not. But the times are a-changin'.

WINNER: BLACK OPS 2 While interest is waning and gamers don't trust Treyarch like they used to, there's no way *Medal Of Honor* will do anything other than lose out to *Black Ops 2*.

How many people
DIED
in *Dark Souls*?



IF YOU'VE EVER wondered how many times players died in *Dark Souls*, Namco Bandai has got the answer you're looking for.

"We actually worked this out," laughed Carlson Choi, VP of marketing at Namco Bandai. "In the first three weeks of the game being on sale, we shipped 1.5 million units worldwide... of that, the average death experienced by the player in *Dark Souls*, which is about 200 deaths per user, that works out to about a quarter of a billion of deaths since we shipped the game.

"I don't know if that's something to be proud of, with the amount of torture we've put so many gamers through."

We didn't share our shameful story of playing for ten hours, putting the pad down when we reached the only merchant for miles, accidentally pressing **R2** against the table and hitting him, then quitting forever when the merchant would never stop attacking back in retaliation.

WILDCARD ENTRY ASSASSIN'S CREED III

EARLY NOVEMBER

SERIES SALES

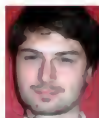
38 MILLION+

It's out around the same time as *COD*, but it's not in direct competition. As such, you can never count out the ability of *Assassin's Creed III* to succeed where all others fail: a popular series and a brand-new entry (not just an update) mean this could well end up being the one game to rule them all this year.



DEAD SPACE 3 TO REANIMATE SURVIVAL HORROR?

What does EA's sequel need to do to reclaim The Fear?



THE RECENT RELEASE of *Silent Hill: Downpour* (and the *Silent Hill HD Collection*) has got us thinking about the upcoming *Dead Space 3*, and survival horror in general.

Specifically, playing these games is another reminder – as if any were needed – that most games either influenced by or directly descended from the survival-horror classics of yesteryear just don't intimidate the player like in the good ol' days.

Of course, some people might take exception to that phrase on the grounds that the aforementioned classics of survival-horror's heyday feature shonky mechanics and frustrating save systems.

To which we say: yes. Good. This is why they were so intimidating, because, like in real life, dying had a tangible punishment. You didn't just respawn at the last checkpoint. You restarted, potentially, hours away from where you were.

We would argue that the scariest element of survival-horror games is geography, and navigating it successfully. Everything you meet in the meantime is just conversation.

When there weren't checkpoints everywhere to keep you on the right track, every move had to be calculated, every step thought about. If you went the wrong way, made the wrong call it could be curtains, or your stress levels would raise. It was enough to give you *The Fear* on those grounds alone, but it's something that most publishers wouldn't dare do now.

The reason? Because Johnny Casual might moan when he gets killed. We understand that, of course. Games cost a lot of money, people want to be entertained, blah blah blah.

Dead Space is no exception. EA's horror title might be marginally more frightening than your average 'horror' game – we're looking at you *Resident Evil 5* – but it's not a patch on, say, *Silent Hill 2* or *Clock Tower*.

It's more action focused, sure. But with a few tweaks it could be just as nail-biting as those classics. In fact, Visceral already did it in *Dead Space 2*, it just hid it.

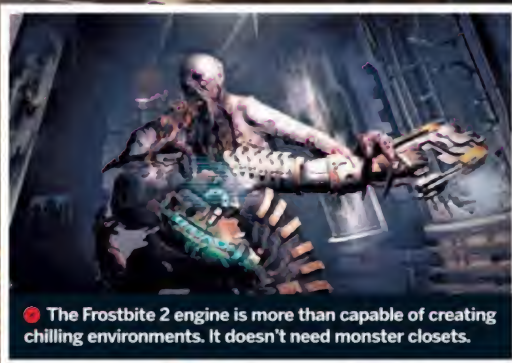
Hardcore mode gave the player three saves to complete the game with. It also made your enemies monstrously hard. For *Dead Space 3*, we'd love the developer to iterate on this and present it as an option right from the start, minus the harder enemies. That or make it so that the game only saves when you complete a chapter.

Radical thinking? No. Game developers, especially those in the horror fields, need to remember that a bit of challenge isn't a bad thing. Playing *Silent Hill 2* is a confusing, frustrating, desperate challenge, and not in a bad way. Where am I? Where's the next save point, and what will I encounter on the way there?

Dead Space needs more of this thinking and less of the weapon upgrade stations if it wants to really capture – and arrest – the hearts of people that play it. Put the guns down Visceral, and quit the handholding. It's then that players will find out if they can make it on their own, which is scarier than any enemy jumping out at you.



● It doesn't look like much, but this is far scarier than *Dead Space* and its contemporaries.



● The Frostbite 2 engine is more than capable of creating chilling environments. It doesn't need monster closets.



MASS EFFECT MEETS FINAL FANTASY

The biggest RPG series collide and the result is...

Armour. That's what you get when you cross *Final Fantasy XIII-2* and *Mass Effect 3*. You probably also get an ending so disappointing that your fingers will instinctively curl up in self-defence knowing how hard you'll be slamming the keyboard in anger but that's for another day. Right here, right now, Noel and Serah have their own versions of Commander Shepard's trademark N7 armour, which costs £1.79 from PSN Store each.

While Square Enix hasn't been particularly protective over letting other games seep into its *Final Fantasy* series, *Assassin's Creed* already making its stamp on *XIII-2* via a

DLC costume, the surprise here is that BioWare would let *Mass Effect* wander outside of EA's sight. *Kingdoms Of Amalur: Reckoning* has Omni-Blade daggers, an obvious nod to Shepard's close-range weapon, but that was a fellow RPG published by EA. Square Enix muscling in on the *Mass Effect* action is odd. Not an entirely unwelcome surprise, but odd nevertheless.

It's part of a growing trend, with *Virtua Fighter's* Akira already cued up for *Dead Or Alive 5* while Bayonetta will dust off her heels for *Anarchy Reigns*. Neither qualifies for the following list, though...

OTHER WEIRD CROSSOVERS...



FREDDY KRUEGER

Mortal Kombat

From slasher gore in *Nightmare On Elm Street* to the indignity of Stryker shining a torch in his face. The shame.



BURGER KING

Fight Night Round 3

Halfway through the career mode, for reasons known only to himself, Burger King dances to the ring alongside your boxer.



YODA

SoulCalibur IV

Who knew a green midget with Force powers would be a wonky fit in a weapons-based fighting game? Everyone but Namco.



PHIL COLLINS

GTA: Vice City Stories

You can even watch in-game Phil Collins performing *In The Air Tonight*. Next month: Tom Jones performs *Sex Bomb* in *Resi 6*.



FRANKIE BOYLE

Grand Theft Auto IV

Comedians Ricky Gervais and Frankie Boyle show up at Split Sides. You can't shoot any of them. We know you were thinking it.



JESSICA CHOBOT

Mass Effect 3

IGN's Jessica Chobot plays Alliance News Network reporter Diana Allers. We booted her out the spacelock over *Eden Prime*.

PC'S BIGGEST GAME ON PS3?

Diablo III is lighting up the lives of PC owners everywhere, so it's time to look at the odds it'll wind up on PS3...



WHAT IS IT?

Diablo is the game that popularised the click-on-monsters-until-they-die-and-grab-loot genre. It hit the shelves on 31 December 1996, back in the days when games could be released after Christmas without Token Man In Suit screaming about missing the Christmas markets, and a stream of *Diablo* expansions plus sequel soon followed. The past 12 years have been quiet on the *Diablo* front, though, a silence that will be broken by *Diablo III*'s release on PC come 15 May.



WHY SHOULD YOU CARE?

The combat appears to be a fairly simple click-fest yet it quietly tickles the dangling 'but it has hidden depths!' cliché gland that lies dormant in every games reviewer. Even so, combat is not *Diablo III*'s true strength. No, *Diablo*'s strength has always been Stuff. Items, armour, weapons, enemies, traps, there's a ridiculous amount of Stuff and everything is randomly generated, ensuring replaying value few games can hope to match.



IS IT COMING TO PS3?

The official line is that Blizzard is 'continuing to explore' a way of bringing *Diablo III* to consoles, a response that covers everything from beating a PS3 devkit into pieces because the dungeon lighting needs AlienWare Super N9000-X QT V.3 to work properly through to picking up a DualShock the odd lunchtime and sighing with discontent. Bear in mind Blizzard has often repeated the same line for *World Of Warcraft* on console, and where's that? Exactly.



ANSWER: Blizzard is under no pressure to release *Diablo III* on PlayStation 3, even though it's easy to imagine Bobby Kotick sending the studio numerous 'DIABLO III ON PS3? LULZ HURRY UP' emails. So in all honesty, probably not. The controls would survive. It's more a question of whether there would be technical compromise.

INSTALL

ANATOMY OF... FAR CRY 3's VAAS

The big bad guy of Far Cry 3 – or is he? You've played as much of it as we have – Midres Vaas is an intimidating man. He's also completely mad in the face, spending most of his time killing people, babbling, and babbling before he kills people

MO' HAWK, MO' PROBLEMS

The most terrifying aspect of Vaas's character isn't that he's the leader of a bunch of psychopaths on an out-of-control island. Anyone can do that: just ask David Cameron.

No, the real clue that Vaas has gone completely insane is that he's rocking a hairstyle that went out of fashion about 30 years ago, one that is now openly mocked on the streets by even the stupid. The Mohawk is a throwback to a simpler time, when punk was a legitimate thing and not just for nostalgia-addled cretins and confused students. If Vaas is rocking one of these, he's well versed in public hate and sneering derision: perfect training for a mass murderer.

SCARFACE PUN

A very lazy way of making your character appear tough is to give him a scar, and Ubisoft has really gone to town on Vaas's. Look at it: it's like the Grand Canyon up there. If this whole madman thing doesn't work out he could organise helicopter tours into that thing. When Vaas washes his face, you could whitewater raft down it.

What we're trying to say is that Vaas has a really nasty scar on his face. The question is: how did he get it? We don't know, although it wouldn't surprise us if he got it by banging his head against the table every time *Far Cry 2* got a bit rubbish.

HEART OF GOLD

According to Ubisoft, underneath all of his supposed nastiness Vaas is a man suffering from deep, deep pain. What caused said pain hasn't been revealed – maybe he's still not over the fact the original *Far Cry* was ruined by the arrival of mutants that made no sense?

Or maybe it's something more serious. Has war sent him round the bend, like Colonel Kurtz in *Apocalypse Now*? Did he forget to recoup his reward card points at Game? Has he still not figured out what a split-infinitive is yet (we don't know either)? Is he upset about the spate of day one DLC?

It'll all be revealed in time. Our money's on the second reason, mind.

TAKING THE PIS-TOL

Although he's seen here brandishing a shotgun, Vaas is also to be seen with two pistols, one in each hand. Again, it's a sad indictment that he can't let go of the past: twin pistols is so Nineties. We're surprised he's not wearing wraparound shades and listening to a MiniDisc player.

We get the feeling that Vaas would be much happier if he just accepted that he needs to move on. But we doubt that you'll be able to just talk to him about it. He doesn't seem that kind of chap.

ROGUES' GALLERY

HOW DOES VAAS STACK UP AGAINST FAR CRY'S OTHER VILLAINS? LET'S FIND OUT



DOYLE

CIA agent who pretends to be on your side but ends up betraying you at the end of the original *Far Cry*. Points for brainpower and cunning sadly offset by getting killed, which isn't very smart. Also: doesn't have a Mohawk.
HARDER THAN VAAS: No



DR KRIEGER

Mad scientist responsible (OR IS HE?!) for creating the original *Far Cry*'s mutant population. Points for being well smart and that, but he also then loses points for also getting killed. Also: doesn't have a Mohawk.
HARDER THAN VAAS: No



THE JACKAL

Gun-running mercenary badass orchestrating all kinds of illegal wars in *Far Cry 2*, but is he really a bad guy? Probably. Not that it matters, though, because he doesn't have a Mohawk.
HARDER THAN VAAS: Equal



WHOEVER DESIGNED FC 2'S RESPAWNING ENEMIES

Whoever it is, we're holding them responsible for turning a great concept into an utterly boring game. Also: (probably) doesn't have a Mohawk.
HARDER THAN VAAS: Yes

TOP 5 WEIRDEST GAMES

Bored of 'Shooty Gun Game 3: Modern Killwar'? Imagine if there were different choices out there. Maybe five of them. And imagine if we compiled them in a list. That would be useful



1 LINGER IN SHADOWS

A weird tech-demo of sorts where you manipulate a long cut-scene with rewinds, zooms, alternate angles and light sources to find hidden sigils. More importantly, it's the only game on PSN where you can say, "Our favourite bit is when the flying dog comes out of the cat's eye."

2 EL SHADDAI: ASCENSION OF THE METATRON

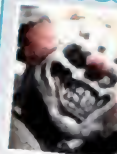
It was the poster child for the 'buy original games!' drive that flashed up when released, then died down again when only four people bought it. Is it a commentary on God? Is it *Tron* meets Romanian disco? Is that an aubergine or an uncooked sausage? What is love?



3 NOBY NOBY BOY

It has no structure besides messing about, no real objectives to accomplish and your character is basically a stray Haribo, which you can pull and stretch and watch as you let it go and it floppily contracts into a broken shape half resembling what it used to be. Entirely pointless, completely brilliant.

twitterwatch



@davidscottjaffe

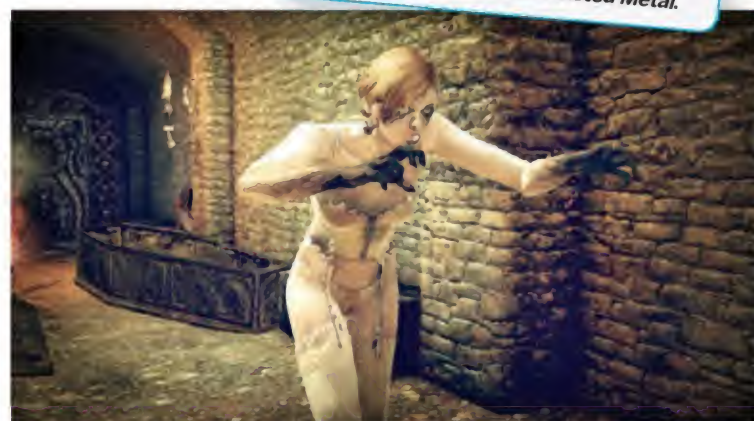
"No more *Twisted Metal* for me thanks. Love the series & crazy proud of our latest but I've had my fill for a loooooong time."

@PlayMag_UK says: David

Jaffe answers a fan tweet asking after *Twisted Metal* on Vita. David Jaffe has now left *Eat Sleep Play* so it was unlikely that new *Twisted Metal* was in place but now we know - no more Jaffe and *Twisted Metal*.

4 .DETUNED

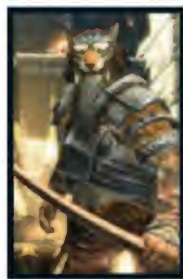
Right. So there's a man sitting in a chair and you can make his head shrink or explode and make him dance around the chair to techno music or turn his head into an elephant head and small blue smiling creatures jump up and down in the background around the orange lines and there's also weird singing going on in the background and the elephants are dancing around the chair together and... wait. What?



5 SHADOWS OF THE DAMNED

Full of weird moments, the most notable being when your gun gets excited, triples in size from the crotch outwards and becomes the 'big boner', which you use to shoot at enemies. Also: your dead girlfriend chasing you in lingerie and crossing an interdimensional portal on a massive near-naked lady's body. Of course.

TEAM PICKS Our favourite weird games



ANDY

SKYRIM

Skyrim isn't weird, other games are. Why are they not like *Skyrim*? Why would anyone play anything that isn't *Skyrim*? They're not even trying to be *Skyrim*, as if not being *Skyrim* is a good idea. I don't get it.



STEVE

SILENT HILL: DOWNPOUR

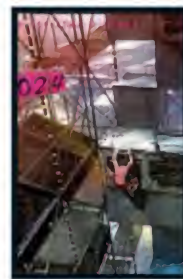
After successfully choreographing a stage play of *Hansel and Gretel*, the play comes to life and Murphy has to fight his way through the woods to the cabin.



IAN

ASURA'S WRATH

Never before has a title for a game summed up a game in such an apt fashion. It's a game (more a collection of QTEs) about a bloke called Asura getting really mad. And it's bonkers.



RYAN

CATHERINE

"Oh and the sheep are symbolic of fidelity, it's a metaphor for climbing through the narrative of life and..." Shut up. It's a game where you have to escape a giant baby's head.

Re:Play

You are the controller! But only on these pages

Dildo bats, confused ideas of bravery, public warnings and Phil Collins. At long last Play's Friday nights and emails from readers share something in common! Shame no one emailed in about mysterious blood stains, though

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SAINTS ROW BETTER THAN GTA?

Hey Play,

This is my first letter to you. With *Grand Theft Auto V* coming out there have been so many rumours going round about the game. I mean I've been hearing stuff about the realistic view of the game. I have no problem with it being realistic but come on! A speed limit in a game? Now I looked back at your ratings for *GTA IV* and 98%? Wow, somebody was being generous. I must admit, though, I am excited for a new *GTA* game but I probably am more excited for a new *Saints Row* game as I found that they are more fun than the *GTA* games. However, I do think that if a new *Saints Row* game is announced then *GTA* will win but I would prefer *Saints Row*. The only problem I have with *Saints Row* is the lack of multiplayer, which I know *GTA* is better at. Anyway what do you guys reckon? Thanks for reading. Great mag, love reading it.

Lee Snelling



Speed limit is unlikely to happen because the only thing that would limit is FUN. If Rockstar is going down the realism route it's more likely to have you accidentally blocking the toilet at a friend's party or having to do the weekly shop at Tesco and buying extra fruit and veg so you're not judged at the till or whatever. As for *Saints Row* vs *GTA*... it depends. One series has dildo bats, the other has Phil Collins. You can't choose between that.

SHORT AND SWEET

Hey Play,

I was reading *Play* issue 215 and I noticed one of the things you wanted to hear about was Trophies. I think Trophies are essential. They are so much fun to collect. Every time I get one I feel a sense of accomplishment. I even have a friend who only buys games for Trophies. Please reply.

Yours sincerely, loyal fan

Luke Nulty

Okay, we've replied.

SHORT(ER) AND SWEET(ER)

Hey Play,

Have you had the hands-on with *Resident Evil 6* yet, guys? I know I could read the mag but still trying to find a store that sells it!

Mark Plant

Yes – turn to page 42. If you can't find *Play*, order it from imagineshop.co.uk. Then shout at your shop. Or the person behind the till.

★STAR LETTER

THIS IS A PUBLIC WARNING

Dear Play,

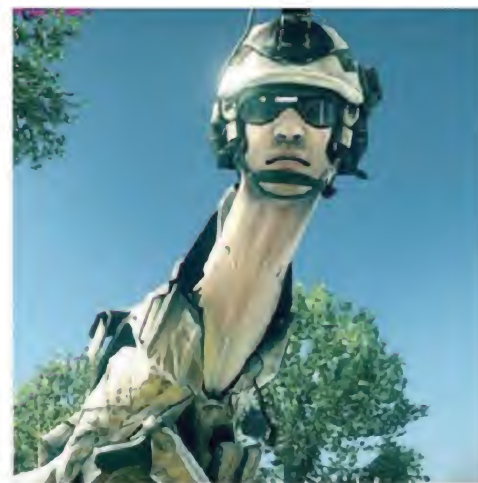
Love the mag. It's the only mag for the PlayStation worth reading. Why are you not on Zinio? Anyway, the reason for me contacting you is to complain about the new download for *Battlefield*. This is the biggest rip-off I have ever experienced in my gaming life. £31.99 for a complete and utter waste of time. The weapons unlock does not unlock all the sights and accessories for the guns you unlock. You

get very little for your money. I am so angry about this rip-off I will never buy another EA game as long as they treat their customers like this. You must warn all *Battlefield* fans, DON'T BUY THE DOWNLOAD CONTENT!!

Keith Sunenberry

Centuries from now, when PlayStation 3s are nothing more than stardust, tales will be told of a guardian of the

people. "You must warn the fans," he is said to have screamed to the Elder Gods. "DON'T BUY THE DOWNLOAD CONTENT!" And with that he threw his arm in the air, sword aloft, justice beaming off the blade and across the land. He was more than a man. He was purity. He was a cipher. He was... SUNENBERRY. We'll scratch the URL for our Zinio home onto your statue: <http://gb.zinio.com/playissue>



YouTube

www.youtube.com/
PlayMagUK

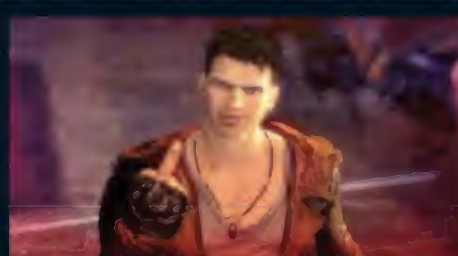
Things you may have missed on our YouTube page



DiRT: SHOWDOWN:
BOOST TRAILER



SONIC 4: EPISODE 2:
LOCK-ON TRAILER



DMC:
PUBLIC ENEMY TRAILER



Write in, and win! Every full-length letter we print receives a free game. For each letter we included this month, the sender wins a download code for *Skullgirls*, which is available NOW for PSN (£9.99). We've reviewed it in this very issue if you want to know how fabulous it is.

THE BIG ISSUE WHERE IS THE BRAVERY?

I remember the times when game companies were brave and dared to make games that were different from the rest, games like *Heavy Rain* and *L.A. Noire*, but it seems that now all they can do is make sequels to their previous games.

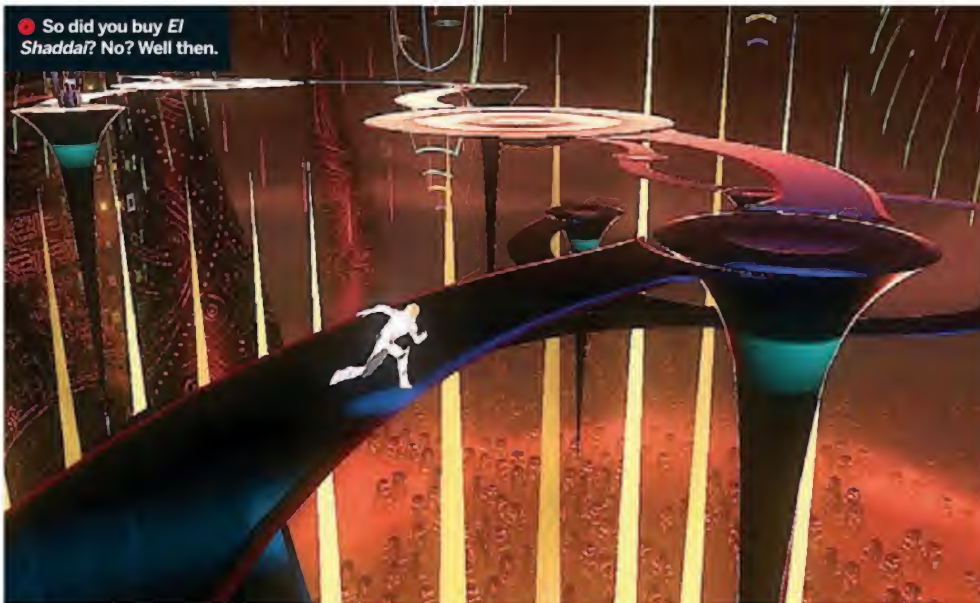
Reading through your recent *The Biggest Games* feature shows that all gaming fans have to look forward to is continued sequels such as *Assassin's Creed III* and *Resident Evil 6* and the same first-person shooters and action-adventures that seem like a downgraded *Call Of Duty*. It seems that us gamers only have *The Last Of Us* as an imaginative game to look forward to.

Soon, games like *Assassin's Creed* and *Call Of Duty* will run out of sequels, leaving us nothing but the same game that has just been slightly improved every year. I

hope in the future that we will see more imaginative ideas in videogames and show that there still are many ideas left untouched in the gaming industry that could make a truly brilliant game.

Reece Ward

You're right and you're wrong. It can feel like the 'big game +1' formula is all too dominant but there are still plenty of games that are imaginative and different – *Journey*, *L.A. Noire*, *Shadows Of The Damned*, *Catherine*, *El Shaddai*, *Portal 2*, *Ico & Shadow of the Colossus*... support those titles. You'll have a richer gaming experience and support those who dare to be different. If you want something really weird, try *Linger In Shadows* (the game we mean, don't hang around alleyways and blame us when you get in trouble).



● So did you buy *El Shaddai*? No? Well then.

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We take to our Facebook army made up of our nearest and dearest to ask...



Play

What are you most looking forward to at E3 this year?

Like • Comment • Share • about an hour ago •

James Fothergill *GTA V* and *PS4* maybe?

Matthew Kettleborough more *Dust 514*:D

Daley Roberts Some *GTA V* gameplay fingers-crossed. Also I'd like to see more of *MGS: Rising*, I know people been on its case after the last trailer but I can't help but be excited about a Platinum game and some *RE6* gameplay.

Daniel Gough definitely *Grand Theft Auto V* the most, let's see what Rockstar have up their sleeves for this. Also more info and some gameplay for *The Last Of Us* and *Assassin's Creed III*, looks as if it's the new step for the AC franchise from what I've seen.

Michel Sabbagh Crytek announcing *TimeSplitters 4*.

James Ward I know it's incredibly unlikely as Valve are BASTARDS! But I would love to see Gabe Newell wobble on stage and then just pull out a red crowbar while the audience go mental, start crying and occasionally throw their poo at each other.

Jing Sakamoto *Final Fantasy XVII*.

Max Garbut Any evidence that *Agent* hasn't been left for dead.



LOST PLANET 3:
DEBUT TRAILER



PROTOTYPE 2:
WEAPONS TRAILER



GHOST RECON: FUTURE SOLDIER:
MULTIPLAYER TRAILER



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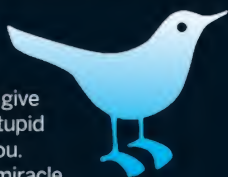
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 No seriously, follow us. We give away games, we retweet stupid videos and we *will* talk to you. No seriously, we will. It's a miracle we manage to make a magazine each month



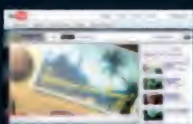
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Like us at www.facebook.com/PlayMagazineUK where you can ask questions, keep up to date with the team and laugh at pics of us



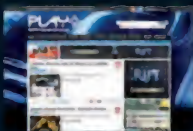
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Subscribe to our channel at www.youtube.com/PlayMagUK which has the latest trailers and funny(ish) videos we made ourselves



Play-Mag.co.uk

Opinion, analysis and hilarity can be found on our website www.play-mag.co.uk so join the debate, tell us why we're wrong and make us cry a bit



Forum

Got something to talk about? Tell us on our forum: www.play-mag.co.uk/forum



Podcast

The **Play** team talks games every month
nowgamer.com/podcasts/nowgamer-podcasts/

EA'S AWFUL CUSTOMER SUPPORT

Dear Play,

I have been playing and enjoying *Mass Effect 3* and its multiplayer component so I decided to purchase three spectre packs. I received the following message: "One or more of your purchases has failed to process. If this continues please contact customer support."

I contacted Sony customer support, who explained to me that they have never heard of this message before and it will be sent to head office. I awaited contact from customer support which sadly did not arrive, so I once again contacted Sony customer support who informed me I needed to contact EA customer support.

I then headed to the EA site and started a chat session with an EA game adviser. I explained the problem and I was then asked to be more specific. I bought them in the in-game store, I explained. He then asked me from where again. Somewhat bemused by my seeming inability to communicate effectively I repeated the problem and he then directed me to the *Mass Effect 3* forums and ended the chat session. So I went to the forums and logged in with my EA account, the one associated with the game I just bought and validated the online pass for, the one that is registered on the EA servers. I went



At least EA fixes wonky endings... ho hum.

to the *Mass Effect 3* PS3 technical support forum... "You do not meet the requirements to post here."

So I went back to EA customer support and started a chat with another game adviser and advised him of my problem whereby he directed me to the forums. I explained that I apparently do not meet some vague set of requirements to post there. He tells me to register my game. You know... the one that I already validated the online pass for and connected to the EA servers with. He says that will allow me to post. I went to my EA account and registered *Mass Effect 3*. Once more I went to the forums where complaints, grievances and genuine customer support problems go to die. I navigated to the PS3 technical support forum: "You do not meet the requirements to post here."

Am I not good enough? Have they found out about the misdeeds of my youth? Have they spoken to that girl I was with in my late-teens? Is my grasp of the English language at an inappropriate level for staff to effectively ignore me? I then trudged back disgraced to the EA customer

support site and spoke to another EA customer support adviser. I told him of my woes both at the forums and the disappearing in-game content. "Can you please help me," I cry? "Can you help me customer support?"

"Sorry, sir, this is an in-game issue, we are not trained to deal with that."

I said my farewells to the inadequately trained adviser and shrunk back to my corner of the network... unsupported, ill-advised, lacking requirements and poorer for my efforts.

Yours sincerely,
Niall Balmer

Part of us thinks that EA has a real problem. Yours is not the only email we've had on the subject this month (Jonathan Darkin – we heard your pain too, buddy) and even **Play** has had problems with activating EA accounts and registering them to the right game. It's a horrible technical mess that someone on EA's side has to untangle. Then again, another part of us wants to know what it is you actually did with that girl in your late-teens. Don't think we won't shop you to the police, Niall. We're onto you son.

PLAY-MAG.CO.UK

PLAYSTATION PLUS: NOW ESSENTIAL?

PlayStation Plus, the premium online service for PlayStation 3 that offers subscribers freebies, discounts, early access to demos and betas, and some other rubbish like avatars, has hit its stride in recent months. There has been early access to the *Journey* demo, free, full versions of *Far Cry 2* and *Trine 2*, massive discounts on more things than we can count (ie 'more than three') and even more rubbish things like avatars. PlayStation Plus still won't convince everyone, as not many will want to pay for a service when they get the skellington (and, for many, the main event in the shape of online play) of it for free anyway.

And there's still the off-putting notion that you only get the licence to play the free games until your sub runs out, which raises issues of what happens when Sony eventually cancels the service in a few years' time. But generally speaking, PlayStation Plus has taken huge strides in recent months, changing itself from a luxury – something that gave you free copies of Sega Mega

Drive games on an irregular basis – into a service that actually offers deeply tempting offers soon after games are released. Oh, and it did free *Back To The Future*, which is great because I wasn't going to buy that but I did want to play it.



<http://bit.ly/GW7FCQ>



You ask us questions, we reply on Twitter, then we reply here so everyone else can see, then you ask us more questions. Join in at @PlayMag_UK! Or don't...

@PAUL_BOWLER I really like the *Silent Hill* games, but should I bother with *Silent Hill: Downpour* or just get the *HD Collection* instead? If you haven't played *Silent Hill 2*, get *HD Collection*. If you have, go for *Downpour*. *Silent Hill 3* is good but not good enough that *HD Collection* would get the vote over *Downpour*.

@PICTOPIRATE With all these HD remakes coming out are there any games you missed first time around you wish you'd played? Or would like to see remade? *Devil May Cry 2*, we only played the HD version to see how bad it is (it's bad). *Ape Escape HD* would be rad as balls.

@REESTERS Is there ever going to be a *Heavy Rain II*? Nope. David Cage likes sequels about as much as we like pigeons.

@SIDEWINDER_16 Are Namco Bandai ever going to do an *Ace Combat HD* series? Unlikely. HD collections thus far have been of publishers' flagship series (*Jak And Daxter*, *Devil May Cry*, *Silent Hill*). In Namco's case, it's more likely it would do a *Ridge Racer* or *Tekken HD Collection* than *Ace Combat*.

@MR_MOOBS What are your top three games so far this year? Ryan – *Mass Effect 3*, *Devil May Cry HD Collection*, *Journey*. Ian – *Mass Effect 3*, *Everybody's Golf Vita*, *Journey*. Steve – *Silent Hill: Downpour*, *FIFA Football*, *Crash Time 4*.

@ABLUFLYINGCAR What will come first, the new *Half-Life* or *Armageddon*? I don't want to close my eeyes, I don't want to fall asleep...

@GAMINGGAZ85 Okay... what did you guys TRULY think of the *Mass Effect 3* ending? The ending should have been that the galaxy came together to create a giant iron pot with a cardboard cutout of Shepard at the bottom. The Reapers all fly into the pot but realise too late that it's a trap – the real Shepard closes the lid and you can hear the Reapers screaming as they cook. It then cuts to Shepard, Tali and Garrus sitting around a table eating Reaper stew. "I can't believe we beat the Reapers!" says Tali. "Well, it's like I always say," replies Shepard with a smirk, "you always REAP what you sow!" Tali laughs and the game ends on a freeze-frame as Shepard and Garrus high-five, which fades out as *Don't You Forget About Me* starts playing over the end credits.

PERIPHERALS SUCK

Dear Play, I think your mag is AWESOME and funny but that is not what I wanted to tell you, this is – about a month ago I started getting bored of playing *Uncharted* and *Portal 2* so I thought I'd go play *Gran Turismo 5* instead. After a while I really started getting stuck into the game and it was becoming the only game I played, after a week or two I bought a Logitech Driving Force steering and thought it will help the whole experience; turns out it was the complete opposite. It actually felt great at first but when you drive



in races it is really hard to steer, especially when driving fast cars. Is it my fault, should I try getting used to it or is the wheel just bad. And are all peripherals not as good as just using a PS3 controller?

Adam Narain, Durban, South Africa

Well, Adam, arcade sticks are great for fighting games once you get used to them and... oh... oh dear. Maybe that's it. Peripheral makers can't create pads that are too similar to Sony's DualShock for copyright reasons and so they often end up producing something different, ugly, awkward and weird instead.

Evolution has shaped our gaming hands into the perfect claw shape for DualShock. Having said that, you can't replace steering wheels in cars with DualShocks, so maybe now is a good time to get used to a steering wheel, eh?

COMPETITION CORNER

THIS MONTH: STUFF

We're surrounded with free stuff. Sometimes it's free stuff we quite like, sometimes it's stuff like a *Rage* novel, Unreal University certificate, *Prototype 2* shirt (size medium? Puh-lease), Ezio Rabbid figurine, *Prototype 2* chewing gum and *X-Men Destiny* promo copy and we don't know what we can do with it. We could melt it down and build a statue of legendary Play designer Andy Salter out of the smouldering plastic to stroke forever or we could send it all to one lucky winner just for answering this question correctly:



WHICH STUDIO DEVELOPED PSN TITLE JOURNEY?

- thatgamecompany
- thatothergamecompanyinnit
- Infinity Ward

Pop your answer and home address in an email to play@imagine-publishing.co.uk with the subject header 'Daniel Peel Is Going To Space Goodbye Daniel Peel'. Closing date is 6 June. The winner will be notified by email. Next month: More free tat, hopefully with a Capcom theme. See you then!

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THE FULL LOWDOWN ON

METAL GEAR SOLID 5

THERE ARE BIG QUESTIONS SURROUNDING THE NEXT ENTRY FOR THE LONG-RUNNING METAL GEAR SOLID SERIES. FORTUNATELY, WE HAVE BIGGER ANSWERS



WHAT WILL THE

STORY

BE ABOUT?

After the disaster that was the ending to *Metal Gear Solid 4*, the question on everyone's mind is: where next for the craziest story in gaming?

Good question. Kojima thought he had it cracked when he suggested another *Metal Gear Solid 3*-style prequel. Players would be cast as The Boss, as she and the Cobra Unit stormed the beaches of Normandy. Naturally, this idea was so amazeballs that it couldn't possibly happen, with concerns raised about Kojima taking a back seat and the project being handed to such a young and inexperienced team.

So, with The World's Greatest Idea dead, Snake retired into the sunset and Raiden hopping around chopping robots to pieces, where is there for *MGS* to go? We still think Kojima will set this next game in the past. The reason is simple: Kojima won't stop hinting at it.

Released artwork (showing Big Boss and a dog, an allusion to his new 'Diamond Dog' unit) should be a big enough clue, as should the ending of *Peace Walker*, which nicely sets up Big Boss's next moves from the mid-Seventies onwards. Africa is the likely setting – Big Boss establishes Outer Heaven there following the events of that game – and there's a strong chance

that players will be smack bang in the middle of the ideological split between Big Boss's Militaires Sans Frontieres and Zero's Patriots.

For those of you who haven't a clue what we're going on about – and that should be a lot, seeing as Kojima has retconned his timeline so much it makes George Lucas weep with jealousy – after the death of The Boss, Naked Snake (Big Boss), Major Zero and other *Metal Gear Solid 3* alums form up to create a new world order to preserve and celebrate the Boss's legacy. When Big Boss is badly wounded, Zero creates clones (Solid, Liquid and Solidus) as a contingency.

Big Boss recovers, but disillusioned by all of this skullduggery he splits off to form his own army, his own ideology and, to look after his mullet, his own brand of hairspray (citation needed).

It's this conflict that then echoes down the series timeline. Think of it this way: if it is set in the past we'll get to see young Ocelot in his triple-agent prime, Big Boss, Major Zero, Gray Fox (who was doing his murdering thang in Africa at the time) and, maybe, a young Solid Snake. These guys duking it out in Africa, which would also bring *MGS 4*'s multiple-combatant conflicts into play? Yes please, barman.



GAMEPLAY MECHANICS INTRODUCED IN...

METAL GEAR SOLID 3



CAMOUFLAGE



JUNGLE SETTING



SURVIVAL VIEWER

METAL GEAR SOLID 4



OPTOCAMO



PSYCHE



DREBIN POINTS

MGS: PEACE WALKER



CO-OP



TEAM MANAGEMENT



INTERACTIVE CUT-SCENES

WHAT NEW

GAMEPLAY

CAN WE EXPECT?

If there's one thing we know about Hideo Kojima, it's that he's not afraid to make players sit for hours listening to entertaining gibberish about pens that are guns and also, have you seen that new *James Bond* movie, it's very good, hmm and so forth.

If there are two, it's that he's never been afraid to change gameplay styles or systems between games, and we expect *MGS 5* to be no different in that regard.

If the story-based rumours are accurate, then there's the potential for combining established mechanics with intriguing new

ideas. With an African setting we fully expect *Snow Eater's* fundamental gameplay to return: camo indexes, infiltration objectives, flowing mullets.

With the ideological war waging, however, there's surely no way *Peace Walker's* intel and defection system won't return. This time we envision it to be on a far grander scale: as the Cold War threatens to heat up, claiming borders, territory and expanding your forces across the region could be key to the overall narrative.

MGS 4 introduced the concept of 'Nowhere To Hide': with the

frontlines of the past now reduced to stateless conflict between private armies, Snake had to choose and abuse his allegiances. If we're honest, opening level aside, we don't believe Kojima fully realised his goal. Now he has another chance: warring parties, fluid affiliations, fragile alliances. In the murky world of the Cold War, filled with double agents and triple-crosses, Kojima has the opportunity to fully express himself.

Peace Walker had you building Mother Base: what if *MGS 5* has you building a nation-state? Is *Metal Gear Solid* now about to become one giant version of Risk?

We're not sure, but it's certainly an idea that's got us thinking. As accomplished as *Peace Walker* is, there's no denying that its form is influenced by the machine that houses it: short play times, piecemeal objectives. Would players be prepared for the same if they were playing it on console? We think not. For a lot of gamers there would probably still have to be a very focused narrative for which to plough through, filled with heroes, villains and everything in-between. In all honesty we expect exactly that to return, but it's got us thinking about the online modes...



• The standalone release of *Metal Gear Online* only hit shelves in Japan.



• MGO servers will shut down on 12 June, four years after release.



HOW WILL

ONLINE

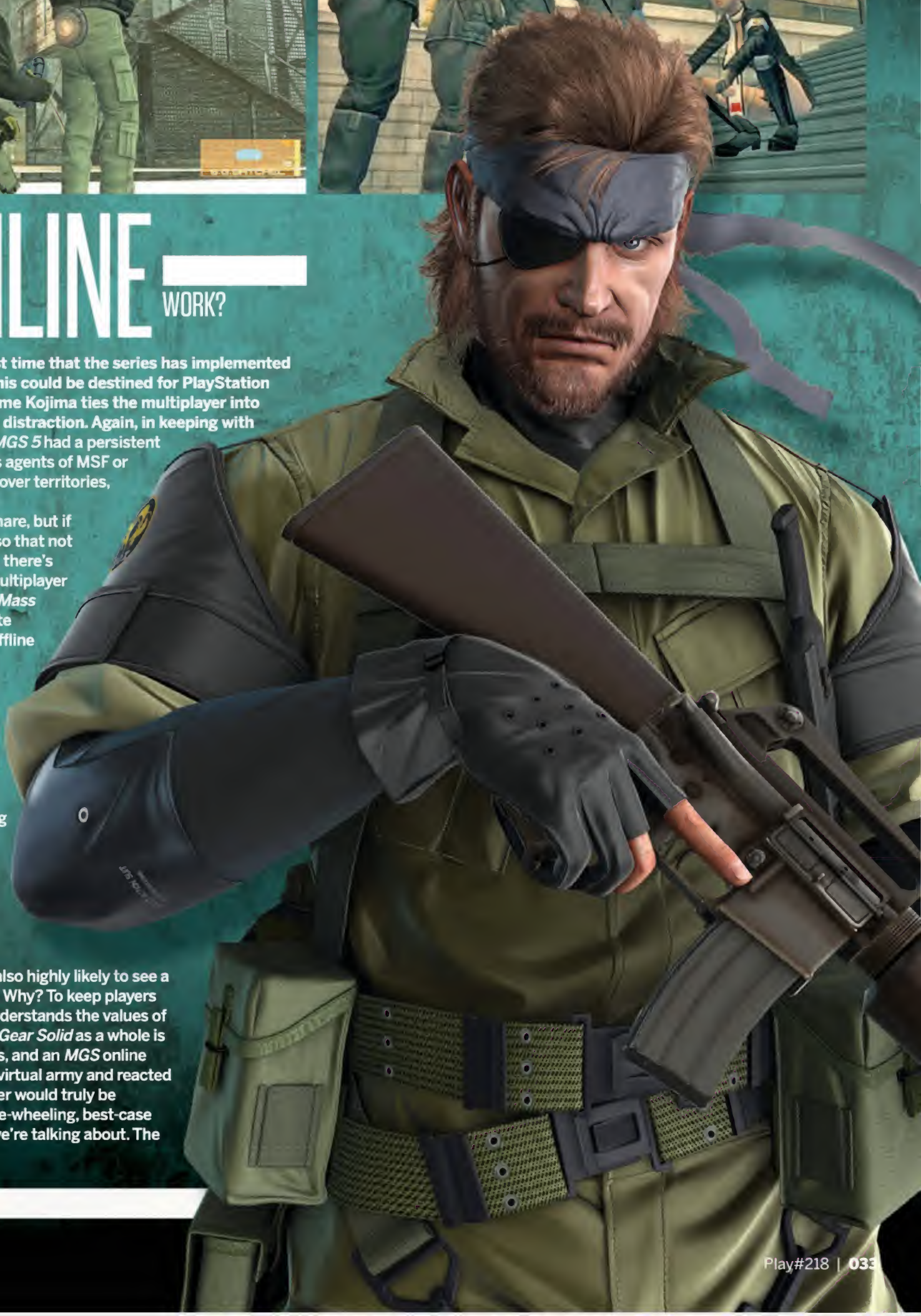
WORK?

MGS 5 wouldn't mark the first time that the series has implemented an online mode but given this could be destined for PlayStation 4, this should be the first time Kojima ties the multiplayer into something more than a fun distraction. Again, in keeping with the Africa/ideology vibe, what if *MGS 5* had a persistent online mode that saw players – as agents of MSF or the Patriots – battling for control over territories, which fed into the main story?

Technically it would be a nightmare, but if certain servers were established so that not everyone's battles affected yours, there's plenty of scope for a single and multiplayer game that are one and the same. *Mass Effect 3* tried this but couldn't quite seamlessly blend the online and offline elements together.

The past two console *Metal Gear Online* games were good experiences constrained by adhering to established gametypes. *Peace Walker* expanded the idea to co-operatively tackling the main game. If building armies and taking land was to be at the forefront of this new *Metal Gear Solid*, we wouldn't be surprised to see Kojima and his team implement a persistent world to battle over, with each side having different technologies or attributes.

Speaking of persistence, we're also highly likely to see a *Call Of Duty*-style ranking system. Why? To keep players playing. If there's one man that understands the values of rankings, it's Hideo Kojima. *Metal Gear Solid* as a whole is obsessed with titles and accolades, and an *MGS* online mode that actually put you into a virtual army and reacted to the highs and lows of your career would truly be something very special. This is free-wheeling, best-case scenario stuff, but this is Kojima we're talking about. The man's an insane genius.





• The colours, the setting, the tank... this must be *Metal Gear*, no?

WHAT NEW

TECHNOLOGY

WILL BE USED?

Metal Gear Solid is synonymous with cutting-edge technology, in and out of the game. Kojima's work is boundary-pushing magic that stands as a testament to what a machine can do: remember how good *Metal Gear Solid* looked on PSone? *That Metal Gear Solid 2* trailer? *Snake Eater*'s incredible jungles? *Peace Walker*'s PSP-busting visuals?

It's no surprise that, yet again, Kojima has cooked up new technology for his next home console MGS game: the FOX Engine. Built for next-gen hardware (yes, we mean you PlayStation 4), the engine was devised by Kojima to be the "best engine in the world" and work started after the completion of *MGS 4*. Kojima demoed his work before last year's E3, showing off a lavishly detailed jungle environment, which

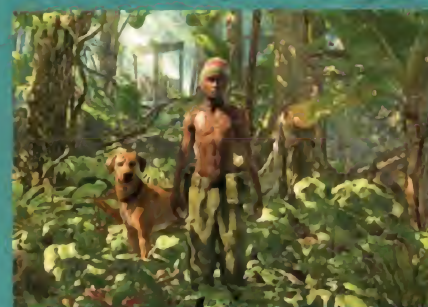
ties nicely into an African setting for *Metal Gear Solid 5*.

Kojima has been teasing fans with certain images rendered in FOX Engine, including a man being tortured who is supposedly a 'killed character' from the MGS series. Kojima has already stated it's not Colonel Volgin, but if the Seventies-Eighties time frame is correct then it could be Gray Fox. After all, according to canon, Fox was heavily tortured before he became the Cyborg Ninja, having his ears and nose cut off. Either way, the shots released of a man screaming are both realistic and intriguing, and when you throw in that Kojima has been tweeting about Gray Fox and including his image in the background of various demos it's hard to think it could be anyone else.

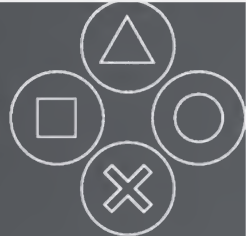
So what can FOX Engine actually do? Kojima used the tech to

render an in-game model of one of its programmers in an hour. The lighting will allow for moving objects rather than being pre-calculated, the fancy way of saying 'will look much nicer'. Finally, in a nod to classic Kojima perviness, he also mentions one of FOX Engine's key features being 'see-thru underwear'.

To give one example of how this could be used, Kojima could have a huge crowd of people who all have individual faces with realistic lighting such as shadows reflecting their actual body shape, rather than generic shadowy blobs by their feet. And they could all be wearing see-through underwear, we suppose. Kojima hasn't spoken about the actual gameplay possibilities of FOX Engine but given it will be used for all Kojima Productions titles in the future, you know it's going to be pretty impressive tech.



• This was a 'killed' MGS character, rendered in Fox Engine. So who is it?



● Kojima either tweets pics of MGS figures, his haircut or his food.



● Kojima Productions has been casting recently but for what?

WHAT IS KOJIMA'S INVOLVEMENT?

With the technology looking promising and potential for a scenario to make MGS fans weep with joy, scrutiny turns to Kojima himself. He's more than capable of turning out a great MGS game, but this is a man that has been trying, and failing, to escape the series since 2001.

Every MGS game carries with it a similar story of how Kojima wishes that this is his last game in the series, and his desire to turn the franchise over to someone else.

Sadly for Kojima, no one seems to be able to do it. His most recent attempt to step away from Metal Gear projects was *Metal Gear Solid: Rising*. What happened there? It was reborn as *Metal Gear Rising: Revengeance* after Kojima had to step back in and push the project into the waiting arms of Platinum Games.

His young team aren't ready to take over, and we wouldn't be surprised if Kojima was under pressure from Konami to stay at the helm of the franchise, which is why he'd be the man in charge of *Metal Gear Solid 5*. Not that we think Kojima really wants to leave the Metal Gear series behind anyway. No one understands Metal Gear better than him and while he's spending his current time promoting new Metal



Gear T-shirts at Uniqlo, you don't get the sense of a man ready to say goodbye to the series.

He always does pretty well on the gaming side, too, to be fair, but there's no getting away from it: Kojima needs an editor, or someone to tell him that hour-long cut-scenes aren't really the way of the future.

The best two games in the MGS series are the original and MGS 3, and it's no coincidence that these are the games that are lean(er) in terms of cut-scenes and codecs than the other two. Simply: MGS 2 and MGS 4 feature more waffle than an entire Birds Eye factory run by New Yorkers, and MGS 5 needs less talk more action. Speaking of talk, Kojima's gone a bit mad on Twitter, seemingly being unable to stop taking photos of what he is having to eat at any given moment and throwing out little hints about the Fox Engine and work on his other (or is it?) upcoming project Project Ogre. It's classic Kojima madness, and surprisingly open given the degree to which the industry is regulated by gagging orders and NDAs. In one tweet Kojima openly talks about changing sections of Project Ogre: don't be surprised if he suddenly starts babbling about MGS 5 any day now.



● *Revengeance* will see Kojima take a step back from the series.

25

MUST HAVE GAMES IN VITA'S FUTURE

Since the initial batch hit shelves, there haven't been many releases for Vita. But it won't stay that way for long – here's just 25 of them and whether you should be excited or not



01 DUST 514

■ While at the time of writing this will be a companion piece to the main PS3 game, offering the chance to customise your character and keep up to date on what's going on in the world of *Dust/EVE Online*, don't be surprised if it turns into a handheld version of the console game at some point. CCP has already hinted it's looking into it, and the chance to take this very interesting game wherever you go cannot be overlooked.

ANTICIPATION x x x x x



02 CALL OF DUTY: BLACK OPS 2

■ We would be very surprised if the *Call Of Duty* that will eventually come to Vita was anything other than a full-on FPS. While before the control methods limited what could really be brought to handheld, now we have a way to get the fully fledged experience: all the explosions, all the action, all the *multiplayer* you would expect from a *COD* title is almost certain to make its way to Vita.

ANTICIPATION x x x x x



03 JAK AND DAXTER

■ Naughty Dog doesn't spread itself too thin, so we can expect it to stick with *Uncharted* and *The Last Of Us* for now. Step forward High Impact Games, which would be our pick to take the reigns on a new *Jak And Daxter* game, just as Sanzaru Games has stepped up to the plate for the new *Sly Cooper* entry. A simple return to the classic platforming action of the first three games is all we ask.

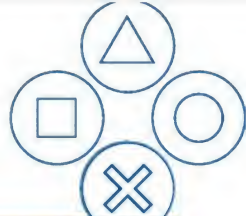
ANTICIPATION x x x x x

04 FINAL FANTASY X

■ Originally our anticipation for what we were made to believe was a remake of *Final Fantasy X* was nearing 'through the roof'. But then it was revealed it will just be an HD remaster, and we got a bit sad about it. Still, the chance for a new generation of gamers to play one of the most divisive entries to the *FF* series isn't something we're going to grumble about – especially as we still think it's, generally, great.

ANTICIPATION x x x x x





05 BIOSHOCK VITA

■ We asked Ken Levine about *BioShock Vita* a while back. His response? "Don't ask." All that means is Irrational's attention, for now, is focused on *Infinite*'s release later this year. But once it's out of the door, we get to see what the talented studio can do with such a robust handheld. Whatever it is – be it straight-up port or bespoke spin-off – it's certainly going to be an interesting experience.

ANTICIPATION



06 MADDEN NFL 13

■ While we may not hold much anticipation for *Madden* making its inevitable way to Vita, we can't help but look forward to it a little bit. After all, *FIFA* on Vita was something we were prepared to play, enjoy, but ultimately dismiss. Then it turned out to be one of the best *FIFA* games in years. If *Madden Vita* does the same thing we will be very pleasantly surprised. But we're not anticipating much right now.

ANTICIPATION



07 KILLZONE VITA

■ While we might secretly pine for a sequel to the PSP's *Liberation* – touch screen, top-down strategy would be excellent – we're not disappointed in the slightest to think *Killzone Vita* will be a first-person shooter. Could Guerrilla really cram in all of the graphical glory of the console versions, though? We're not certain on that one – but the development team is certain to give it their best shot and leave us with something to boast about.

ANTICIPATION



08 WWE '13 VITA

■ Call us cynics and say we're too harsh, but the simple fact of the matter is we don't have huge hopes for *WWE '13*, least of all on Vita. Never mind the fact the game is likely to be very similar to last year's effort, there's also the developer's proclivity for adding pointless, interfering little mini-games into the action. What do you think this means with a touch screen? We dread to think.

ANTICIPATION



09 PERSONA 4: THE GOLDEN

■ If you wanted a highly rated PS2 RPG to be remade in some way for PS Vita, what sprinkles would you ask for on top of the vanilla experience? New voiceovers, a new intro movie, a new character and other fan-requested features? Well prepare your happiness gland for some tickling then, as Atlus is bringing the original, tarted up and with all those extras and more to the handheld space. Judging by the quality of the PSP *Persona* conversions, it's going to be good.

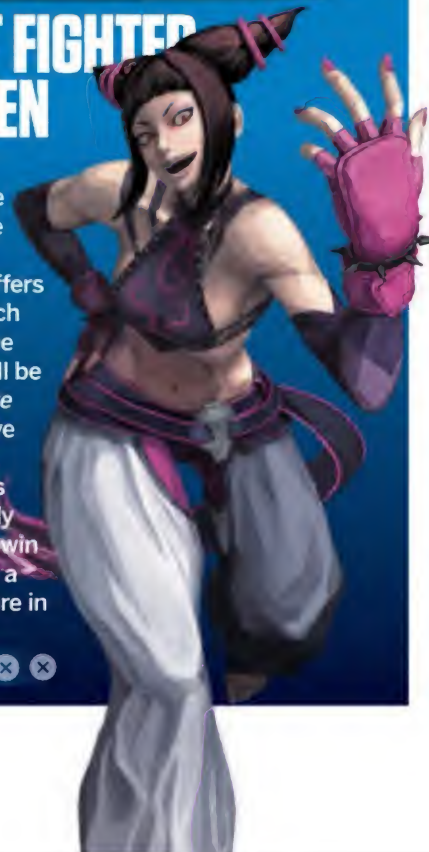
ANTICIPATION



10 STREET FIGHTER X TEKKEN

■ *SFXT* surprised many in that it turned out to be a game going beyond the realms of mere cash-in nonsense and actually offers a fighting game very much worth playing. We assume the translation to Vita will be similar to that of *Ultimate Marvel Vs Capcom*'s move to the handheld, but we do hope Capcom realises the ridiculous (and utterly pointless) tap-screen-to-win mode of *UMVC 3* can die a death and nobody will care in the slightest.

ANTICIPATION



11 NEW LITTLE KING'S STORY

■ There's always room for a bit of quirk, so we've got our critical eye focused firmly on this sequel to the 2009 Wii exclusive. The game sees players taking control of the titular king as he builds and manages his kingdom – oh, and battles, of course. The original was highly rated but sold poorly, so it'll be interesting to see what the money men have demanded change about *New Little King's Story* to make it sell better on Vita.

ANTICIPATION



13 SOUND SHAPES

■ You'll note our anticipation for this one has dulled somewhat. That's mainly because it's been about a year since we first saw the wonderful, mesmerising *Sound Shapes* and it's lost its edge for us. But this unique mix of music, creation and platforming is still very high up on our list of ones to look out for. There's nothing quite like it out there, and we're hopeful the extra development time means it'll be as good as it can be come release.

ANTICIPATION x x x x x



12 ODDWORLD MUNCH'S ODDYSSEY/STRANGER'S WRATH HD

■ What these two remasters will bring in the way of Vita-specific controls we do not know, but we're still looking forward to picking them up. Both games were once Xbox exclusives quite infamously canned on PS2, and both are characterful, unique experiences. Granted, *Stranger's Wrath* is the better game but that's not to say *Munch's Oddysee* doesn't have its charms. Then there's the hope that these two doing well will encourage Oddworld Inhabitants to bring more wonderful adventures to Vita.

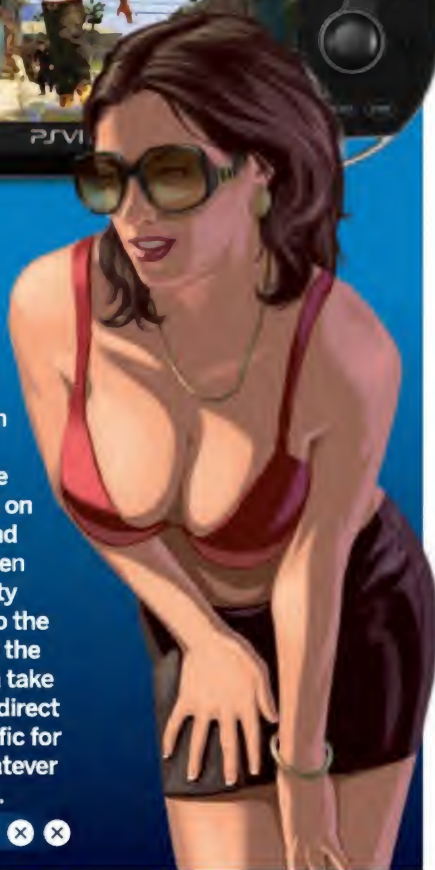
ANTICIPATION x x x x x



14 GTA VITA

■ Think of the worlds Rockstar creates, then think of those worlds on a handheld. Think how amazing it was what the developer created back on PSP, with the *Stories* and *Chinatown* spin-offs, then think of all that creativity and ingenuity applied to the power and versatility of the Vita. We'd fully expect a take on *GTA V* rather than a direct port – something specific for the hardware – but whatever it is it's sure to be great.

ANTICIPATION x x x x x



15 SUPER MONKEY BALL: BANANA SPLITZ

■ Back when *Super Monkey Ball* actually mattered, it was a great game. Right now those original couple of releases are still genuinely good fun and never fail to raise a smile (it's a monkey – in a ball!). But these days? Well, less so. It feels a licence milked, as if something has been lost over the years. But then there's this – touch and tilt controls could, if handled correctly, bring back a spark of something to the *Super Monkey Ball* series.

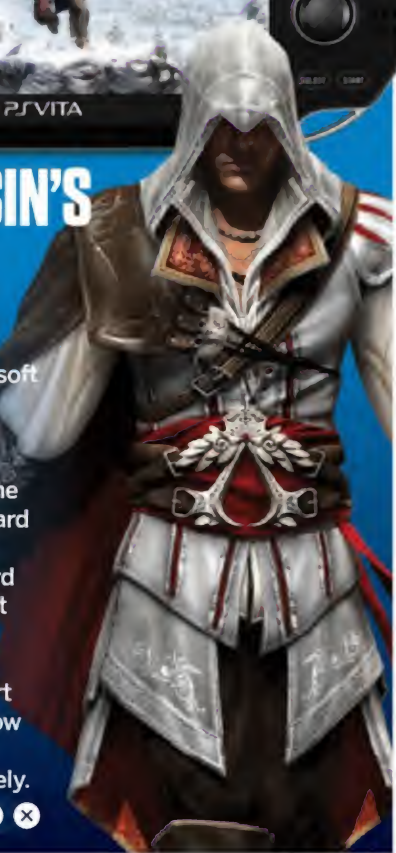
ANTICIPATION x x x x x



16 ASSASSIN'S CREED

■ You could see in past handheld iterations of *Assassin's Creed* that Ubisoft had big plans. But the studio's ambition seemed to overshadow what it could actually pull off in the portable world. Step forward Vita and its rather special hardware, and step forward the ability for Ubi to step it up and give us something that actually deserves the AC moniker. A straight port of *AC III*? That won't be how it happens. A spin-off in a similar vein is far more likely.

ANTICIPATION x x x x x



17 MONSTER HUNTER

■ *Monster Hunter* may be a bit of a Marmite game in the West, but there's one title it holds with an unwavering quality: saviour of Vita. When Capcom reveals its *Monster Hunter* game on Sony's handheld, there will be jubilation. When it's actually released, there will be pandemonium. While we're desperate to see what's done with it and for it to come and give Vita the boost it needs, we're glad to see that Capcom appears to be taking its time with development. Don't rush the good stuff.

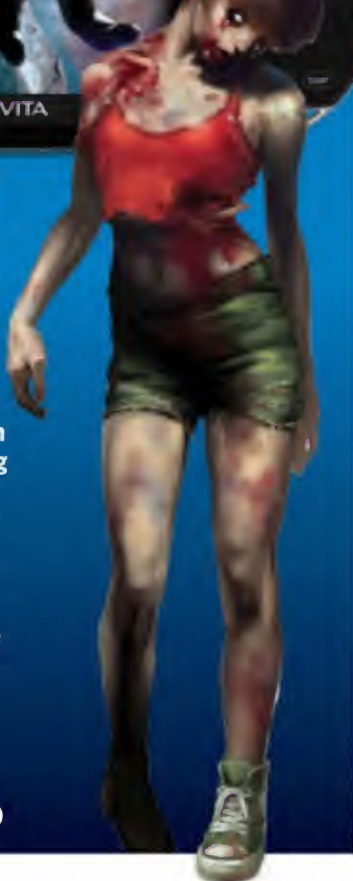
ANTICIPATION x x x x x



18 RESIDENT EVIL

■ This one still burns us a bit. See, we were promised *Resident Evil* would come to PSP a few years ago, but then nothing happened. At all. Even Play, the masters of unlocking information, couldn't get anything out of Capcom. But this time around the studio would be dumb to avoid Sony's handheld. A version of *Resident Evil 6* isn't out of the question, but we've seen with the 3DS that the developers prefer to make bespoke versions for the portable market. Here's hoping.

ANTICIPATION x x x x x





19 LITTLEBIGPLANET VITA

■ We've played this a few times already and it's starting to hurt how much we want it. The ability to play *LBP* is one thing. Being able to create a huge array of extra content is another. But all of this, looking as nice as it does, with the added benefits of portability and a simple touch interface? Well that's something wholly different, with the genuine potential to be the best incarnation of *LittleBigPlanet* yet.

ANTICIPATION x x x x x



20 METAL GEAR SOLID: HD COLLECTION

■ We already know this is great – a fine collection of brilliant games (and *MGS 2*), remastered lovingly and taking us back to a time when ludicrous nonsensical stories were king (just like now, really). It's the 'transfaring' system that keeps *MGS HD* on our radar, offering players the ability to wirelessly swap their saves between Vita and PS3, allowing progress to be made at home and on the move/toilet. And not forgetting the touch screen throat-slitting, of course.

ANTICIPATION x x x x x



21 ZONE OF THE ENDERS: HD COLLECTION

■ The original *Zone Of The Enders* is mainly known by gamers because it was released with a bundled-in demo of *Metal Gear Solid 2*. Other than that people remember it with rose-tinted nostalgia. Alright, we'll stop being harsh: *ZOE* and its sequel were unique, underperforming games in their day and it's great to see they'll be getting another chance to bring their flying mecha, Kojima-infused charms to the little OLED that could.

ANTICIPATION x x x x x



22 SILENT HILL: BOOK OF MEMORIES

■ A step outside the comfort zone for *Silent Hill* – if there is such a thing as a comfort zone for the survival-horror series – sees this online multiplayer-supporting, top-down isometric-viewed action game come into existence. *Downpour* was a step back in the right direction for the series, so right now we're on a bit of a *Silent Hill* high. All the same, there are legitimate concerns with a game moving away from the series that spawned it in such a way.

ANTICIPATION x x x x x



23 RESISTANCE: BURNING SKIES

■ Our initial excitement about *Burning Skies* – the handheld spin-off of the now-finished PS3 FPS alternate history series – has faded. We still think it will be a decent enough game, barring any huge mistakes, but it's hard to really maintain interest in something being made by a studio with such a patchy record like Nihilistic Software's. Nevertheless, what we've played has already proven to be an interesting distraction, and we're always up for shooting more Chimera scum.

ANTICIPATION x x x x x



24 TIME TRAVELERS

■ An unspecified genre of game with a vague description about an event destroying Tokyo and the city being rebuilt in the future makes us not care that much. Slap the developers of *Dark Chronicle*, *Rogue Galaxy* and *Jeanne D'Arc* on the project and you have a recipe for us sitting up and paying attention: that's the case here, fortunately. Info on *Time Travelers* is thin – we don't even know how it will play – but there's a lot of potential there.

ANTICIPATION x x x x x

25 RETRO CITY RAMPAGE

■ A mash-up of pastiche and homage, *Retro City Rampage* combines elements of classic *Grand Theft Auto* with all manner of other – unsurprisingly – retro titles, like *Super Mario Bros.*, *Contra* and *Mega Man*. What started as an experiment to try to re-create *GTA III* on the original NES has ballooned into a full game in its own right and, frankly, we think this one will be something quite good indeed. And even if it isn't, at least it'll make us nostalgic.

ANTICIPATION x x x x x



Your favourite magazines n



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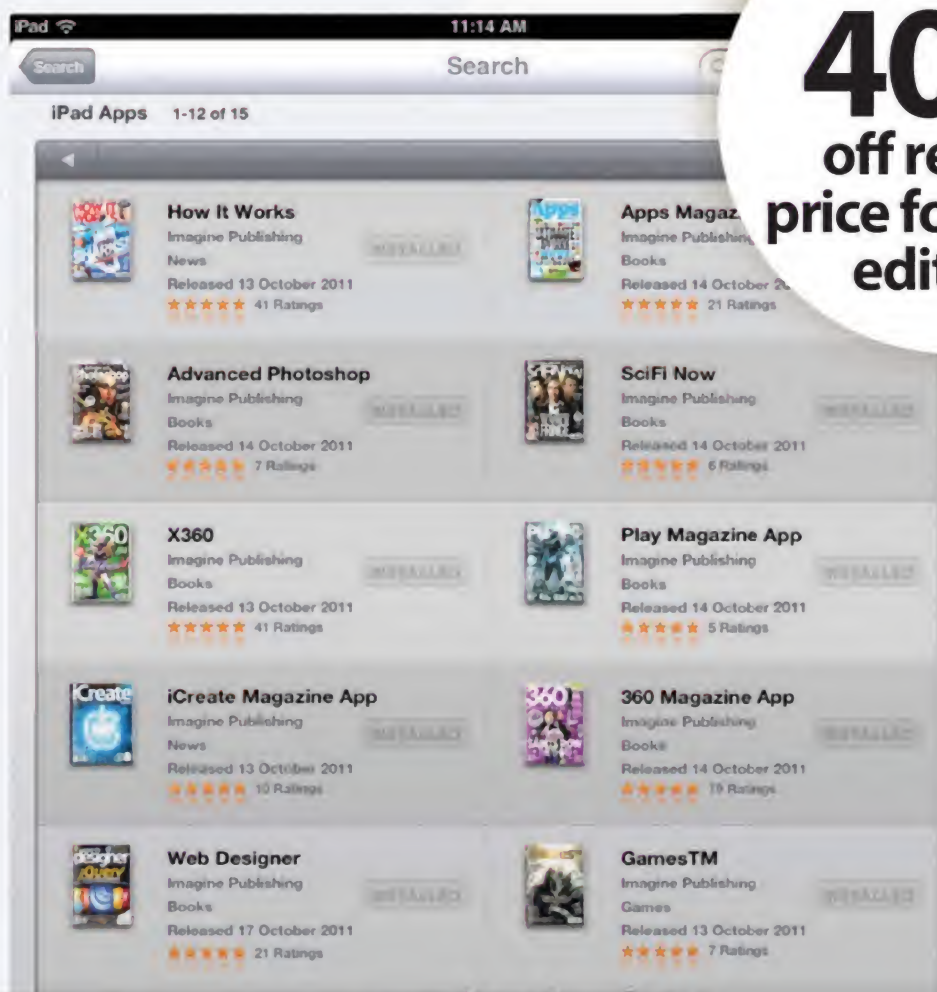


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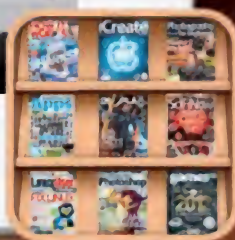
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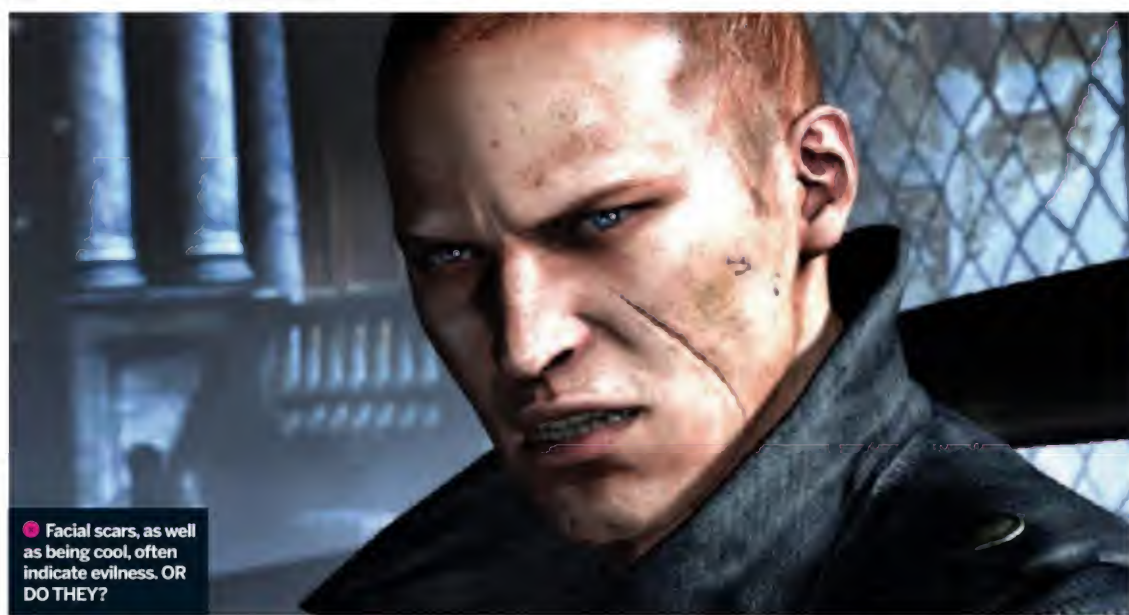
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PREVIEWS

The games that will shape the future of PlayStation



● Facial scars, as well as being cool, often indicate evilness. OR DO THEY?

RESIST CONTROL

No more driving tank-people

REJOICE, FOR THE tank controls of previous *Resi* games have gone, replaced instead by a more 'open' system that offers a smoother, freer way to play. Capcom hasn't forgotten that the decidedly old-fashioned controls of previous games actually added to the horror, though, and is making a priority of ensuring this isn't an all-out action system that will break any tension, horror or suspense.

Then there are the enemies themselves – one second they might be shooting at you, the next you've disarmed them (in more ways than one) and a mutation has caused a scythe-arm to appear. Ranged becomes melee. Combat modifies along with the controls. It's quite exciting.



● Multiplayer is present, but will the AI still be dogmess?



● These guys probably aren't your mates.



FIRST DETAILS

● He's probably just angry because Barry doesn't appear to be in the game.

RELEASE DATE: 2 OCTOBER

Resident Evil 6

Welcome to the world of dramatic horror



The speculation can finally be put to rest: we know what's coming with *Resident Evil 6*, and it's much along the lines of what we predicted in issues (and on the website) past. That being: something that sounds great. Something that sounds like it's learned lessons from the slight missteps in its past. Something to look forward to.

As we already knew, *Resi 6* will consist of three separate playable storylines, each intertwining at points and all playable from the very beginning. All of the stories follow a playable couple – Leon S Kennedy and government agent Helena Harper; Chris Redfield and fellow BSAA member Piers Nivans; and Jake Muller (aka 'Wesker's son') and returning *Resident Evil 2* alumnus Sherry Birkin – and take place across the world, from North America, through the Eastern European state of Edonia and on to the Chinese locale of Lanshiang.

Individually these playthroughs will come in shorter than that of *Resident Evil 5* – but as the developer has been keen to point out, they're not in the market for a *Call Of Duty* five-hours-and-you're-done experience. As such, the total playing time will measure closer to

the 30-hour mark – and that's not even counting Mercenaries mode, which is available and unlocked from the get-go.

But what do three different stories mean besides different characters and cut-scenes? Well it's not a difference in difficulty à la the original *Resi*, nor is it a choice of disc as in *Resi 2*. No, this is three distinct experiences, each with its own method to the horror it presents. Leon's campaign presents the player with a more 'traditional Gothic horror', while Chris is involved in the more action-packed playing style with horrors that suit him personally. New addition Jake is a victim of a pursuit-style of horror, trying as he is to escape his home nation and chased as he is by some bad buggers. Generally speaking the core mechanics are the same, but each character has abilities the other doesn't, making for less-obvious – but definitely present and correct – differences in play.

Then we have the *other* differences, like the new control scheme set to bring *Resident Evil 6* running headlong into the modern age (see 'Resist Control' boxout). Or like the addition of a new, *Dead Space*-inspired HUD. Or the implementation of the 'physical

combat gauge', which is depleted each time the player uses a martial arts attack – yes, you can still roundhouse kick a zombie in the face, but you can't do it non-stop as an auto-win button. It seems to be a simple, welcome addition to add a mite more balance and strategic thinking to affairs. Though it does mean there's every chance we'll see less suplexes.

While we may see less wrestling with the undead thanks to the addition of the cunningly named cooldown meter, we won't be seeing any less of the co-operative play introduced by *Resident Evil 5*. As noted earlier, each strand of the story sees two characters making their way through together – this can be handled single-player or two-player, online or off. Doing away with the cumbersome checkpoint-reliant system of last time around, *Resident Evil 6* will feature full drop-in, drop-out co-op whenever and wherever you might feel the need. Not playing online? Then split-screen is your friend, and this time around the user interface will be fully customisable, meaning it will be less confusing and more suited to the individual actually playing. But what about Capcom's Achilles heel, otherwise known as 'AI'? Will >

PREVIEW



> we see another Sheva? We have no idea right now, but we sincerely hope lessons from the past have been learned in this regard and we aren't met with yet another near game-breaker.

The core of the *Resident Evil* series has always been the zombies – those shambling undead gits intent on chowing down on your grey matter. They're back, and they're just as shambling and dead as before. But it doesn't stop there – things have changed in the shape of the new enemy: J'avo. A corruption of the Serbo-Croatian word for 'devil', these mutated near-zombies maintain a level of intelligence that allows them to co-ordinate attacks and use weapons – yes, you're looking at pitched gun battles with these bad boys.

But the threat doesn't stop there, as the J'avo are able to mutate beyond how you initially encounter

them. Drill them full of lead and you might see some of their swift regenerative powers come into play, bringing them back from the brink and making them a threat once more. But take off a limb, say, and it might well mutate to be replaced with something just as bad as the hand wielding a gun it once was. Say, a giant scythe-arm, for example. What might start out as some intense cover-based shooting may soon evolve (or mutate, more fittingly) into a tension-soaked close encounter of the scythe kind. If this is indeed another area *Resi 6* takes influence from *Dead Space*, we're all for it. We all know how unrelentingly threatening those bloody necromorphs are.

Resident Evil 6 is trying to offer something for everyone, and from what we've seen so far it might just be able to do that without much in the way of compromise. There's a

story with plenty of fan service, but it's simple enough that you don't need to have studied the *Resi*Wiki for years on end. There are multiple styles and mechanics offered in the different characters, attempting to bridge gaps between playing styles and bring enough variation to keep interest high. There's more strategy and intelligence involved, it's more user-friendly, while it takes influences from the original game it goes to pains to avoid allowing players to simply 'get stuck'. Mercenaries is unlocked from the minute you turn the game on.

You can't ever please everyone, but *Resident Evil 6* looks like it's going to do everything in its power to please as many people as possible. Except for the Barry Burton Fan Club, of course.

Resident Evil 6 is being developed by Capcom. Check out www.residentevil.com for more details.

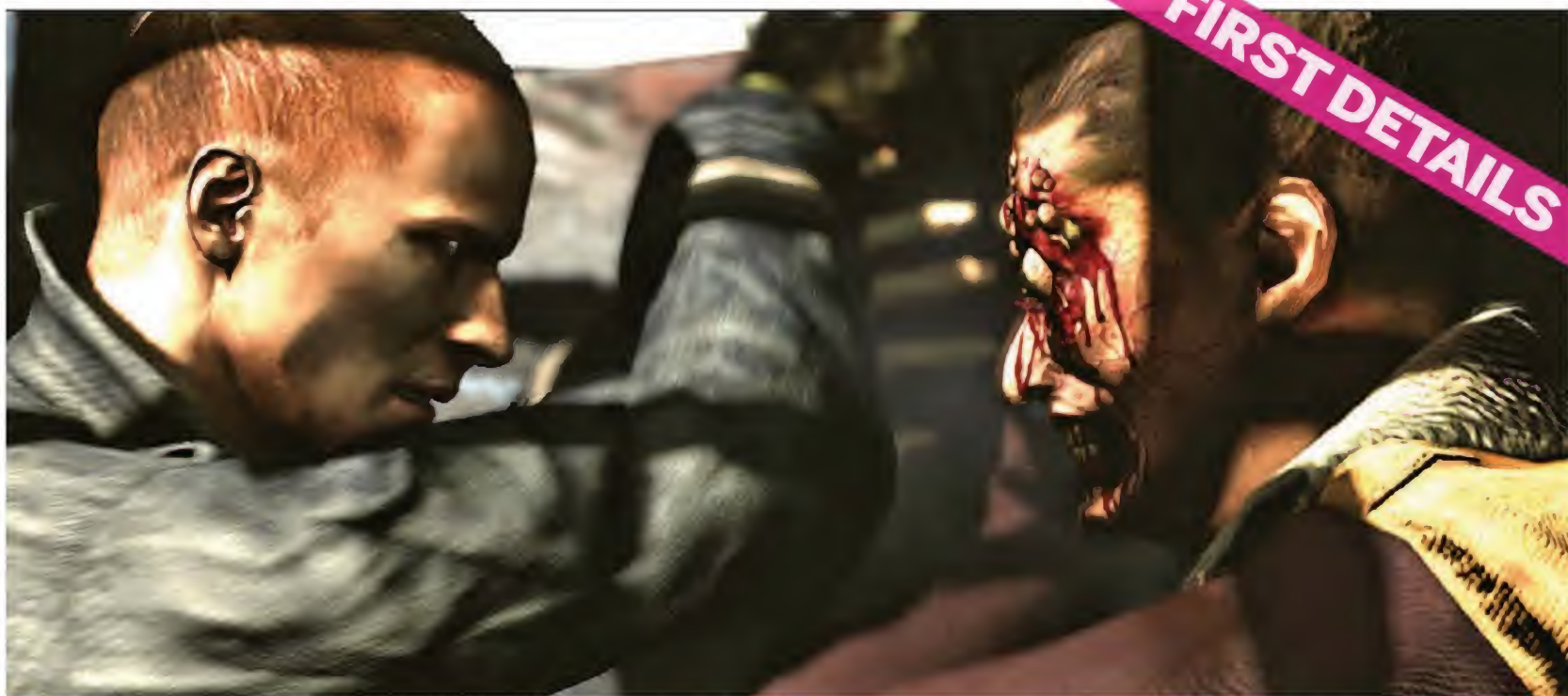


WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

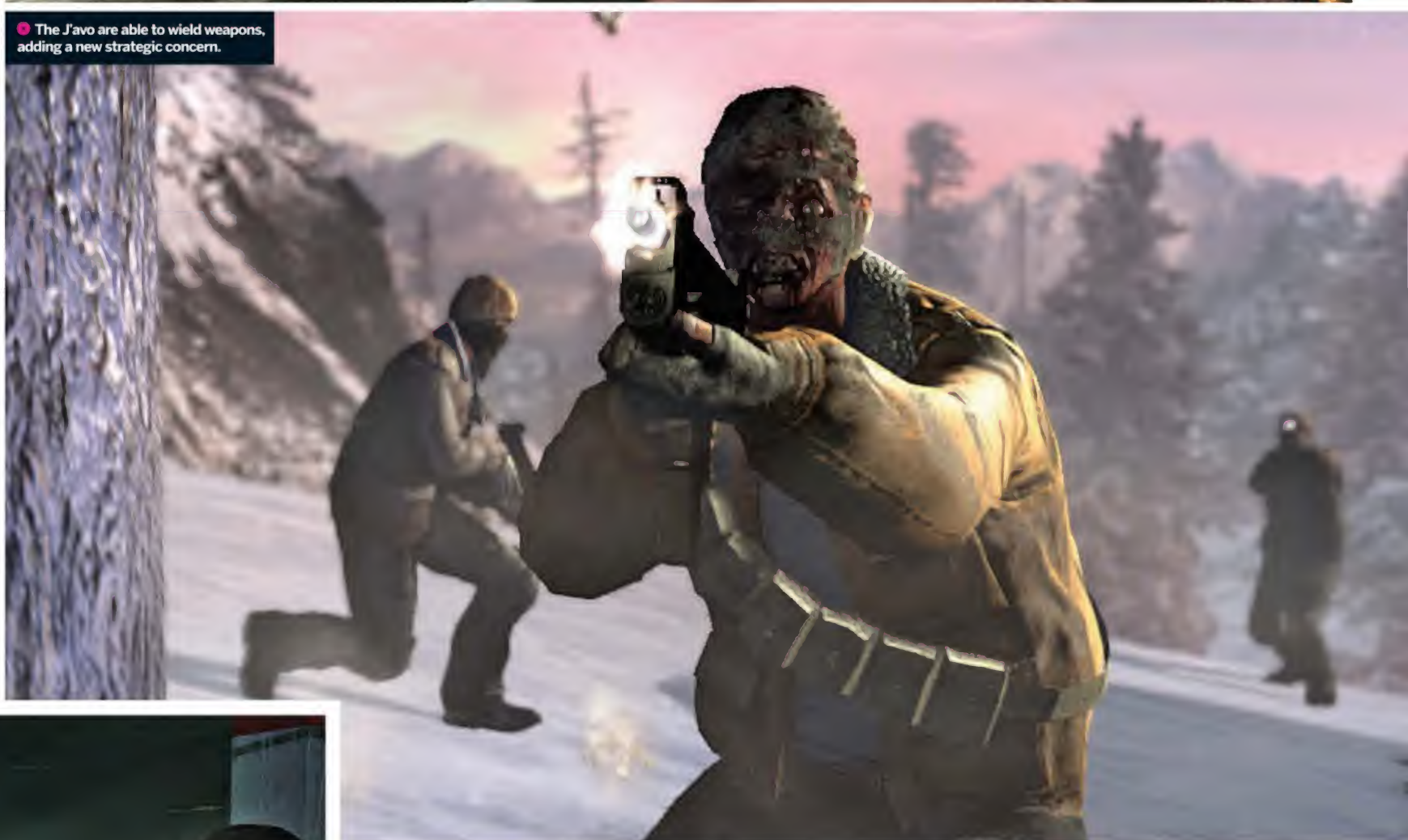
- ◉ A rebirth for a series that was in danger of becoming stagnant.
- ◉ Three stories, effectively three games, about 30 hours of game-time.
- ◉ A new control scheme, finally, bringing things into the modern age.
- ◉ New enemies will bring with them a new style of horror, apparently.

READ ME

Including external contractors, *Resident Evil 6* has around 600 people working on it. Yes – six hundred. That's quite a lot, in case you're wondering.



● The J'avo are able to wield weapons, adding a new strategic concern.



INFLUENCE SCHMINFLUENCE

Where do you get all these wacky ideas from?

RESIDENT EVIL 6 will be a lot of things, at least according to those making it, and they haven't been afraid to tell us just where influences are coming in from. There's *Dead Space* ('especially the HUD'), *The Walking Dead* and the original *Resi*, to name but three, and an entire new stance on the type of horror the game should provide. No more survival horror: say hello to 'dramatic horror'. You'll be seeing more action influences, but at the same time Capcom wants a game where your worst fears lurk behind every corner. No word on chainsaw bag-heads, though.

PREVIEW



Should you be reaching through there, Chris?



Fires like this often indicate things aren't going too well.



The LSK hair returns.

Chris is looking more rugged by the day.

THIS IS HORROR AS ENTERTAINMENT

RESIDENT EVIL 6

Eager to find out the source of the C-Virus, Play sat down with Resident Evil 6's producers Hiroyuki Kobayashi and Yoshiaki Hirabayashi, as well as director Eiichiro Sasaki, for a quick chat



HIROYUKI KOBAYASHI
Producer



YOSHIAKI HIRABAYASHI
Producer

How much should players be aware of the *Resident Evil* back story?

Yoshiaki Hirabayashi: I think fans of the series will get a lot from seeing Leon and Chris. They know those characters and it will mean a lot to them to be able to play as them again. But the way we've designed this game, we've created a back story for the new characters that makes them a part of the *Resident Evil* world, they're going to be new to everyone whether you're a fan of the series or new to it. We want as many people to play this game as possible, which means a lot of new people will play, too.

Hiroyuki Kobayashi: If we're going to be doing all of these stories, I want them to be something anyone can jump in and enjoy without a previous knowledge of the series. However, there's still stuff in there for fans. If you know these characters and you've played the games there will be stuff for you to enjoy. Those people will be able to chuckle to themselves and say 'Ah! I know what that's about'. But even if you don't know the minutiae of previous games you'll still be able to enjoy the story.

How do the separate storylines work?

Eiichiro Sasaki: To start, the three characters each have their own story and

you can choose whichever one you want and play that story – experience that character's story. In terms of length, each character's story is a little bit less than *Resident Evil 5* but when you combine them together you're getting something that is much longer. While each character's story stands alone, all of the characters wind up in the same area of the game, in China, so there is a certain level of overlap. They stand on their own but they do overlap in certain areas. You don't have to play them all, of course.

Will the loss of 'tank' controls mean that loss of struggle for the player?

ES: I think first of all we didn't want to make a straight-up action-type control scheme for the game. We're still trying to make a horror experience. This is horror as entertainment. To that end I think it was necessary to open up the controls a little, make them smoother, so you could immerse yourself in this world more easily. But that doesn't mean you're going to lose control over the player in terms of how they experience this world we've created. You can give them more freedom of control while still guiding their experience in certain ways.

We didn't want to make a straight-up action-type control scheme for the game. We're still trying to make a horror experience

So like I showed in the presentation, there will be times when you're on your back and shooting at enemies, and even though you think you have the advantage at that point because they're lined up and easier to shoot, they can still jump on you and try to choke you and you'll have to struggle to break free.

How do mechanics differ between the game's characters?

ES: If you look at the characters in this game you'll see differences in the way you can use them. You got to see a little bit of Jake and if you look at what Jake does, he's not always using a gun. So because of that, the way you control him is going to be different throughout his levels. If you compare this trailer to the first trailer you'll see there are many cases where Jake is not using a gun, so what that means for the player, how you control him is very exciting but it's not something we're talking about in a lot of detail right now. ☒



● Taking on the Akrid with a knife isn't the best of ideas.



● Giant enemy crab. Must... not... meme...



● The utility rig will surely become a fast friend for players.

RELEASE DATE: TBC 2013

Lost Planet 3

From the minds that brought you *Legendary* and *Turning Point*...

PS3

It's fair to head straight in with the point everyone is making: Spark Unlimited is a resoundingly strange choice to develop the third in a flagship Capcom series. It is a studio that has made some utter tripe in the past in the shape of *Legendary* (62%, **Play** 173) and *Turning Point: Fall Of Liberty* (40%, **Play** 165). It is a choice that confused us and, seemingly, the rest of the world.

But don't judge too quickly, for Capcom – holding tight on the reins – might know exactly what it is doing with the developer yet to prove itself. From what we've seen of the game it certainly looks to transcend Spark's earlier output and, from the perspective of the series it continues, *Lost Planet 3* looks like it could carve out a strong showing for itself.

Set before the events of the preceding two games, *Lost Planet 3* follows everyman Jim who is working to mine and colonise E.D.N. III to earn money to support his wife and child. He's just a regular bloke, really, wise-cracking and with the loveable charm that reminds us of Nathan Drake. But, as with all the best every... men,

he is forced into a seemingly impossible situation: battling the Akrid and the elements.

The returning bug-aliens are no less of a threat than before with even a small group of them proving more than a challenge for Jim and his rifle. This isn't a four-player *Monster Hunter*-like like we saw in *Lost Planet 2* – it's back to the extreme survival that proved so popular first time around.

But then, Jim isn't always on foot. Replacing the giant war machines of the previous game are utility rigs – giant stompy robots made for mining, basically. They're not exactly equipped to fight the alien scourge, but they're more than handy enough in a brawl and can quickly turn the odds in favour of the bearded hero. What was once challenging odds in the shape of a few Akrid becomes little more than an easily squashed (or crushed, or drilled) irritation.

That is, until the big boys show up. Because – remember – this is a *Lost Planet* game. And *Lost Planet 3*, just like those before it, brings massive boss enemies into the fray on a regular basis. In fact, what we've seen of the game so

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- More giant stompy robots smashing up bugs can't be terrible.
- Spark Unlimited can't make anything worse than *Legendary*, surely?
- Capcom's guidance + Spark's technical know-how could = something good.
- Fighting a giant enemy crab in a robo-suit is great, at least on paper.

● This is definitely a foreboding, unwelcoming world.

REVEALED

far threw in a few different ways to fight the same enemy (a giant crab, no less): on foot, where it involved traditional *Lost Planet*-style hunts for the glowing weak spots; in the rig, where it involved almost a *Punch-Out* style of duking with the giant alien; and a combination of the two, where stunning the crab with the rig was then combined with exiting the 'bot and shooting its exposed weak spot (presumably for massive damage). It shows a level of intelligence and creativity beyond what we might otherwise have expected, and it's nothing short of a very pleasant surprise.

Other elements that have our anticipatory glands a-tingling come in the shape of having to battle the elements: your rig will freeze over, requiring Jim to exit and blast it free of ice, thus making him vulnerable; the look of the game, which evokes a feel of the cool blue hues of Seventies science fiction; and the influences, which bring together previous games including the likes of Capcom's current favourite, *Dead Space*.

We're not ready to accept *Lost Planet 3* as Spark Unlimited's step up to the big time. Not yet. But we're going to give it and the developer every chance to prove themselves as worthy of our and your time. Don't let us down, kids.

Lost Planet 3 is being developed by Spark Unlimited. Check out www.lostplanetthegame.com for more details.

READ ME

Capcom has been outsourcing more and more of its normally in-house titles recently, but the choice of Spark Unlimited is surely the oddest one so far.



ALL TOGETHER...

Or one at a time?

LOST PLANET 3 will see some form of multiplayer, that much we do know. But what we don't yet know is the manner it will present itself. It's safe to say from what's been shown and what we've seen that Jim is unlikely to be joined by a group of three faceless mercenaries who jump aimlessly into ravines unless controlled by other players, à la *Lost Planet 2*. But – we feel – it would be remiss of Capcom to completely omit any form of co-operative play. With the more open world structure to things, it just makes sense – alongside the usual competitive multiplayer aspect.

PREVIEW

✓ Bullseye

There's one thing that we worry about – openly and with a tear in our collective eye: accuracy. Just how accurate is *Colonial Marines* to the world created by Scott, Cameron, Fincher and Jeunet (shut up he has a place in this too)? Very. And that's very with a capital VERY. Even down to the placement of a pocket on a marine's cargo pants. Safe to say there are unlikely to be many, if any, mistakes made when it comes to authenticity in *Colonial Marines*. Meaning we can probably dry our eyes.



Aliens: Colonial Marines is being developed by Gearbox Software. Check out <http://bit.ly/amD3oi> for more details.



RELEASE DATE: AUTUMN 2012

Aliens: Colonial Marines

PS3

It's coming out! (NOTE: not of any goddamn walls)

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- A chance to quote all that definitely-not-quoted-too-much dialogue from the movies.
- Co-operative and competitive multiplayer? Yes please.
- You might still be able to be the welder: BEST FEATURE EVER.
- If it's taken this long, it must be good... right?

READ ME

Gearbox is one of our favourite developers, especially because we call its boss **Randy Pitchfork**. Still, it did release *Duke Nukem Forever*. Which was ass.

✓ Hoo-maan

Competitive online (that we've seen) is split between two teams – humans and xenomorphs. The human side is a mix of the familiar, with it being some dudes with assault weaponry, and the rather unique, in that you are the hunted, you are on the back foot and you will get killed if you try to go it alone. No camping, no hiding, hardly any running – stick together and fight together to try to survive. Oh, and use the 'super' weapon pick-ups like the smartgun for a short burst of feeling like you might actually be able to *not* die.



✓ Two for one

Aliens: Colonial Marines is aiming to offer more than just one standard experience when you're playing it. While straight-up single-player will play out like a tense, horror-style shooter with the player near-constantly on the back foot, the ability to have up to three team-mates involved via drop-in, drop-out co-op mixes things up significantly. It's natural that, with more players, the game gets less tense and becomes more a straight-up action romp – and this is something Gearbox is embracing. Both styles of play have a place and the fact that both are offered means there's a bit more depth than might be expected.



✓ Filling the gaps

There were some gaps and leaps of logic necessary to make ties between *Aliens* and *Alien 3*. Mainly how Brian Glover ever achieved any level of authority on a space prison after his terrible PE teaching skills in *Kes*. But Gearbox wants *Colonial Marines* to serve as a loose end-tying device, ready to fill in the blanks and make things make more sense as it goes. This wider-reaching aspect has the go-ahead from the bigwigs at Fox, meaning whatever Gearbox does with this game is canon. The devs have the power.

✗ BAAAAD POINT

The one lingering – oh so lingering – downside about *Colonial Marines* is simply how long it's been in development. It's been so long coming we expect so much, we don't know for sure if features spoken of years ago are still there, we might see a situation where the desire for accuracy overtook the desire to make a solid game years ago – and so on. We don't know for sure, but we do know it's vaguely worrying. Gearbox knows what it's doing, at least outside of *Duke Nukem Forever*, but something that's taken *this* long? Can it really be all that?

✓ Not for you

We hear it everywhere in this age of ultra-accessibility and risk-averse creativity: 'the game is made for everyone'. While not a bad thing in itself, it can become a bit of an irritant when branded on established franchises. So it's pleasing to hear Gearbox openly admit that *Colonial Marines* is a game for the fans – those with no experience will still be able to have fun with it (it's an FPS after all) – but if you're ridiculous *Aliens* fans like us, you'll get a hell of a lot more out of the experience. Just the way it should be.

✓ Xeno-what?

The other side in competitive multiplayer comes in the shape of the aliens, and you will be able to pick this side. Operating from a third-person perspective, you can climb and scabble across all surfaces to swiftly and stealthily sneak up on those poor, terrified marines. If you're fired on, you'll go down quickly – but if you manage to get in close, the ball's in your court. Xenomorphs also get access to a super weapon, effectively, as they unlock the ability to introduce an extra, specially powered alien to the fore in a sort of killstreak reward situation. Scary.

PREVIEW



RELEASE DATE: SEPTEMBER

Dead Or Alive 5

Power up... or down?



'Fighting Entertainment'. Two words that will strike fear into the loins of every *DOA* player out there: after all, doesn't that phrase sound a bit too much like wrestling's moniker, Sports Entertainment? Is it an admission that Tecmo can't cut it making a real fighter any more, and have to rely on cheap gimmicks?

Maybe. For the uninitiated, *Dead Or Alive 5* now features a Power Attack, akin to *Street Fighter IV*'s Focus. It can be charged and unleashed at any time, but the longer you charge for will equal more damage. Unleashing the Power Attack when it's full

slows down time, giving the player ample opportunity to pick a section of stage to slam their opponents into. Or off of.

Yes, like *MK Vs DC Universe*, falling enemies can be chased and pounded midair. Granted, there is some strategy to this, with the possibility of getting reversed always there, but it seems a bit too scripted for us.

Still, this is just one part of the game, and we hope it'll be a flair addition rather than a fundamental one.

Dead Or Alive 5 is being developed by Team Ninja. Check them out at <http://teamninja-studio.com/index.html>

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- Er...
- The Power Attacks look cool.
- It's less about breasts, maybe.
- Ryu from *Ninja Gaiden* is in it.

READ ME

Team Ninja hasn't been the same since bossman Tomonobu Itagaki left. The last *Ninja Gaiden* game wasn't very good at all: what price this will be the same?



● Power Attacks can send combatants off the edge of buildings.



● This is modest for a DOA game. Massively so.

CROSSOVER POTENTIAL

Ryu is in *Dead Or Alive 5*!

SORRY, NOT THAT RYU. You'll just have to wait a little longer for your dream *Street Fighter*/*DOA* crossover (and we know the only reason you want that is because you want to see what Team Ninja do with Chun-Li).

Nope, we're talking about Ryu Hayabusa, star of *Ninja Gaiden*. Will he use that sword? Probably not. Throwing people off buildings is fine, impaling them less so.





RELEASE DATE: MAY

Max Payne 3

Have you got the Max factor?

PS3

Since the first *Max Payne* graced our PCs way back in 2001, one question has lingered like Max in the middle of a shoot-dodge: where's multiplayer?

The answer, it seemed, was simple. Can't be done. Slo-mo? How's it going to work, eh? Exactly.

Well, according to *Max Payne 3*, pretty well indeed. Rockstar has attempted to retain *Max Payne's* core gameplay in the move to multiplayer, and so the cinematic focus and Bullet Time gameplay remain. BT is gained by hitting and killing enemies, and works like this: activating BT slows down anyone in your line of sight to a crawl, and also makes their bullets travel slower. Anyone caught can break out of this by severing the line of sight.

It's impressive stuff – and that it works at all is wonderful – but Bullet Time is just one of a number of Bursts (perks) players can use. Others include Paranoia, which makes members of the other side look like enemies to their own team; Trigger Happy, which gives you a

grenade launcher; and Big Dog, which is a team health buff.

It's fast paced yet also considered: the players (of which there are 16... max) will generally run into the fray guns blazing, but adding more weapons and armour to help you win these encounters will decrease movement and health regeneration speed.

It's a system that works well across the game modes, from TDM to point and bag capture modes to Gang Wars, which runs along the main narrative and fleshes out the back story of the gangs that Max encounters. Five rounds of play will see you battling other players in the different game modes found outside of Gang Wars, tying them together into a loose narrative.

With the question of how Bullet Time works answered then, we're looking forward to getting hold of *Max Payne 3's* multiplayer in the wild. Especially as progress made crosses over into *GTA V*...

Max Payne 3 is being developed by Rockstar Studios. Check them out at rockstargames.com

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- Bullet Time works.
- You can play as Max Payne.
- The modes are diverse and entertaining.
- YOU CAN PLAY AS MAX PAYNE.

READ ME

The first *Max Payne* game to boast a multiplayer mode, Rockstar has implemented it well. A mixture of fast-paced action and tactical thinking: we just hope the balancing stands up.



PAYNE AND SIMPLE

To be the man, you've got to kill the man

SIMILAR TO SOLID Snake in *Metal Gear Online*, Max Payne himself is playable in multiplayer in the appropriately named Payne Killer mode. The first kill of the round turns the player into Max, with the victim becoming his partner Raul Passos. Both players have painkillers instead of regenerating health and are tough to take down, but in a nice twist it's the player that does the most damage to 'Max', not the killing blow, that gets to play as him (and gets the most points).



RELEASE DATE: TBC 2012

LittleBigPlanet Karting

People will be Modding all over the Nation with this Racer

PS3

So it turns out *LittleBigPlanet Karting* is a thing, then. Does it spell the end for *ModNation Racers*? We don't know for sure, but it would make sense – the series has done nothing but flag since it left the capable hands of United Front Games. Moving the studio onto a more recognisable licence after it has proven itself with *ModNation Racers* seems the right thing to do – and you know with the ability backing it all up United Front won't make a turkey. Unlike *ModNation Vita*, which was pump.

What to expect from *LBP Karting*? Would it be lazy to say 'something like *ModNation*' and leave it at that? Yes, and it'd also be misleading. For you see, while the light-hearted kart racing is similar, and while the creation tools – allowing customisation of racers, karts and tracks – is what some might call 'very much the same', there are distinctions to be made that raise this above a mere re-skin.

It isn't just a track creation tool – it's a 3D world in which to build. And while you're building, using tools familiar to the *LBP* series, you

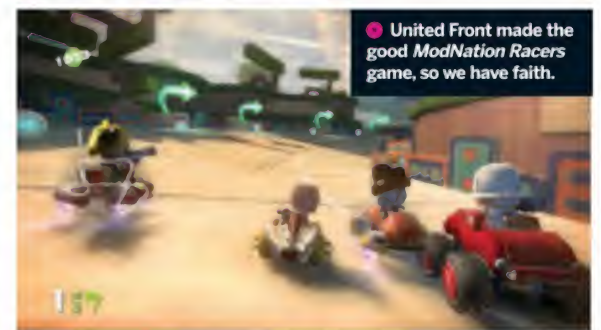
might decide you don't want vanilla kart racing or battles. And that's where it gets really interesting: you can create your own rule sets, challenges and whatever else to essentially create entirely new games in the racing sphere. We doubt it will be as near-limitless as *LBP 2*, but we have full confidence that *LBP Karting* will be exactly the right kind of thing to shake up the creative juices of many of you.

And that's without even mentioning the pre-order DLC (which we might not even get in Europe, as he's a distinctly North American property) – a Kevin 'VP Of Karting' Butler Sackboy costume and kart. Never before has a shirt, tie and side-parting been something we actively wanted to download.

LittleBigPlanet Karting is being developed by United Front Studios. Check out <http://bit.ly/H34bC1> for info.



Because why wouldn't you want to look like... breakfast... browns?



United Front made the good *ModNation Racers* game, so we have faith.



WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- United Front made *ModNation Racers*, and that was great fun.
- As always, share your creations and download those from others.
- The ability to create your very own racing games: yes please.
- Kart racing games are always brilliant and never fail, right?

READ ME

United Front Games is also at the helm of *Sleeping Dogs* – the game that was *True Crime* but is no more.

OBLIGATORY EXTRAS

Sony shows a United Front on features

IT WOULDN'T BE a Sony-published game without 3D and Move functionality (as well as the obvious Play, Create, Share mantra) and *LBP Karting* is no different. While 3D is obviously still of limited appeal, this is the sort of game that could give a new lease of life to the moribund wagglegstick. Just look at *Mario Kart Wii* for proof. Well, not 'proof', per se.

PREVIEW



RELEASE DATE: 6 SEPTEMBER

Far Cry 3

The developers have worked on making the game's characters as realistic and interesting as possible.

Eager for more info, Play went to producer Dan Hay for details

PS3

How much of the previous games is going into *Far Cry 3*? What influence do they hold over it, beyond the name?

There was a lot we loved about *Far Cry 1* and *2* and we wanted to make sure we didn't lose what made them great. It was important for us to remain in a remote setting; being somewhere beautiful and dangerous at the same time. We didn't want to forfeit the core gameplay elements that made it *Far Cry*, such as the fire, the feel of the enemies, and the ability to go wherever you wanted in order to finish the game. Those are the parts of *Far Cry 1* and *2* that we wanted to keep.

How open is the world? Will we see factions, morality, multiple endings, anything like that?

As you explore the island you'll encounter different 'personality bombs' that have gone off, affecting the people living in that area. Take Vaas, for example. His explosive and violent personality dominates the areas he controls, where it feels like the whole place fights for him. There isn't an emphasis on factions in the game, but instead on personalities. And as you go



DAN HAY
Producer

through their world, you'll have to survive their rules.

We've heard 'realism' and 'intensity' mentioned a fair bit, but how realistic are we talking? Will we still be popping malaria pills every few hours and seeing our guns jam for the 40th time?

When we talk about realism, we concentrated on the characters in the game. We want everyone to feel like real people. It's completely believable that the character you play would end up in this space and that you would react the way that he reacts given the situation. The people who grew up in this lawless frontier and didn't have the moral compass that you and I have would turn into the characters you've seen; the Vaases or the Dr Earnhardts. What was important to us was creating a credible experience. We listened to the fans and their reactions to *Far Cry 2* and we made sure that you wouldn't

get malaria, that the weapons are smooth and fun to use (even if they still feel rough), and that you'll be able to fast travel.

Could the emphasis on 'focused exploration' negatively impact on those that enjoyed and were so drawn in by the meandering of the last game?

The key word there is meandering. As you explore the island, you will have the feeling that there's always something around the next corner. That being said, we don't ever want the player to feel lost in the world. Instead, we're presenting exploration as an opportunity, whether you're checking out an abandoned shipyard or diving into an underwater cave, there's always something new, and you're always rewarded for taking a look around. We are making sure that while you're out there, you get something out of it; something that can be used to your advantage in the game.

What are the challenges with maintaining consistency – keeping

things 'on message' – across multiple development teams?

It's a challenge but also an opportunity for variety. As we're creating the game and aiming at the same target, we find ourselves with ideas coming in from different groups of smart, creative people. We were absolutely sure about features we wanted in the game and absolutely sure about the direction we were going. But on some decisions, it turned out that we were absolutely wrong. Having teams bring in different ideas allowed us to pick the best ones, and deliver the best possible game.

Will we see a return to the mutants, aliens, alien mutants and whatever else of the original?

No. Our intention was to create a credible experience that you or I could potentially live through. In the game, there are enough intense and unusual things that happen to you that we didn't need to go into any science fiction.

Far Cry 3 is being developed by Ubisoft Montreal. Check out www.farcry3.com for more details.

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- Takes the great ideas of *Far Cry 2* and focuses them more.
- A focus on character and psychology.

- It's still *Far Cry*, so the fans should be happy.
- OBVIOUS POINT: It looks nice.

READ ME

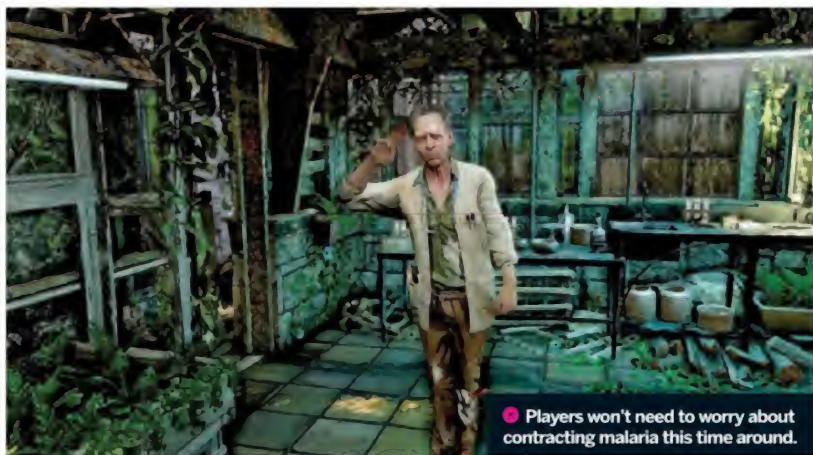
Far Cry 3 will be using the Dunia engine – the same one that powered the second game. So the fire will be good, that much is guaranteed.



● There'll still be plenty of violence on offer.



● Weapons will be smoother and a lot more fun to use than they were in *Far Cry 2*.



● Players won't need to worry about contracting malaria this time around.



L'EDITOR

Making your own freedom

ONE OF THE more unique features, at least from a console perspective, in *Far Cry 2* was the level editor. It allowed players to create their own playground and upload it to be shared with the rest of the world. Will it make a comeback in *Far Cry 3*? Hay didn't beat around the bush: "Of course. It wouldn't be *Far Cry* without the map editor."

PREVIEW



While *DmC* is the first game in the series not to be developed by Capcom, this doesn't mean the studio has taken a hands-off approach to things. Just like its other collaborations, the Japanese are offering as much help as necessary to those entrusted with the property. What that has amounted to so far is little more than the advice of: "If the player wants to do something, let them do it without delay."

RELEASE DATE: TBC 2012

DmC: Devil May Cry

Devil makes sandwiches

PS3

Slowly, ever so slowly, the public and critical reaction to Ninja Theory's take on Capcom's (mainly) brilliant series is warming. Inch by inch the British-based development team is gaining ground in the war against the naysayers, pushing them back with the sheer overwhelming force of a game that Looks Quite Good.

So there's still the tripping point of Dante's look – he does still appear to be a young prannock of the highest order. But that's easily defensible and understandable when you realise: that's just what Dante is. Unless you're playing *Devil May Cry 2*, in which case please hand in your Gaming Card. But other than that – and admittedly before we've been able to sit down and give *DmC* a good hard seeing to – it's difficult to see anything other than an imaginative,

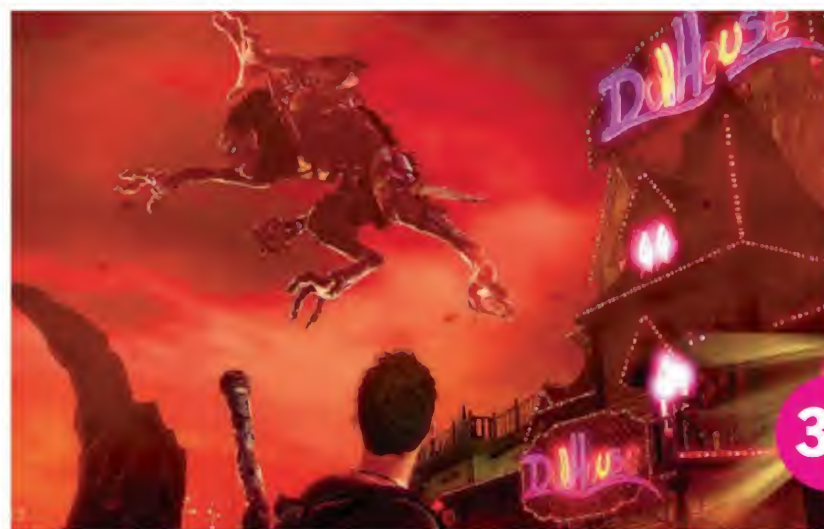
unique take on a game. And it's getting harder for us to ignore the fact that this could well end up getting things right.

There are still legitimate concerns that it's fair to hold, at least beyond the frothy-mouthed resistance of the internet hordes. Ninja Theory has no real track record with fast, instant, responsive combat games – *Enslaved's* weakest point was its pugilism, *Heavenly Sword* was all looks no brains and *Kung Fu Chaos*... yeah. We're willing to be proven wrong – and we hope we are – but it's something we think it's fair to keep an eye on. But whatever happens, it's looking less and less likely we'll be screaming till our eyes bleed about *DmC*.

DmC: Devil May Cry is being developed by Ninja Theory – check out www.ninjatheory.com for more info.



There's another game out there, made by the creator of the original *Devil May Cry* and heavily influenced by what the pinnacle of Capcom's series was able to accomplish. So is *DmC* taking cues from *Bayonetta*? Apparently not. According to the devs, Capcom wanted a direct continuation of the series' philosophy and Platinum Games' witch-'em-up was never mentioned in production meetings. Much as we find that hard to believe.



WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?



Ninja Theory clearly cares about putting something good out there.



The combat flows and is nice and responsive (this is a good thing, you see).



It's a unique take on what could have been me-too nonsense.



It's made people angry. We love it when things do that.

READ ME

Lead producer Alex Jones has received death threats as a result of Ninja Theory's take on *DmC*. Seriously. That's... well, that's just stupid.

4



One way in which the man on the street can be appeased is by bringing the setting into something more recognisable – more true to life. But while young Dante makes his way around this normal, CCTV camera-covered world, he is soon dragged into 'limbo' when spotted by said cameras. Here it becomes the game we know in a world that seems very much alive – and working against our plucky, irritating hero.

5



The best way to survive then is surely to work together, no? No. *DmC* will not see any sort of co-op introduced, regardless of the number of friendly characters popping up along the story. But why? Well, Capcom – and Ninja Theory – never wanted to impact on the 'coolness' of Dante (seriously), but from a gamier perspective: it would ruin your combos. Really, it would. It's a precise art – another person would mess it up.

6



But there's no need to mess up the world Dante inhabits, as it's already pretty messed up. So much so we were willing to bet it was – dare we say it? – *satire*. When stared down and asked this outright, Ninja Theory buckled under the Play team's line of questioning and admitted that, yes, the story – the world – was a satirical one, sort of a mirror of the real world. To which we say: good.

7



But does *DmC* being satirical mean the focus of half the internet's ire, Dante, is actually a tongue-in-cheek character? Unlikely. He's always been a balls-out asshole of a character, loveable in his cockiness and cool enough that we'll let him off with that jacket. And we'll see more of that this time – and much more of Dante himself, what with the opening cut-scene showing our very naked protagonist recovering from the night before. Bless his little face.

8



Fortunately Dante does get dressed before he starts fighting, and combat will be the area where *DmC* proves itself worthy or proves the haters right. Input from Capcom – concerning input lag, no less – gives us hope that Ninja Theory will cope with this relatively unexplored (to it, at least) region of in-game mechanics and not end up crapping out a giant stinker that ruins all our dreams of *DmC* being a good game.

PREVIEW



Like *Portal*, *Quantum Conundrum* is full of light-hearted writing and rock-hard puzzles.

RELEASE DATE: Q3 2012

Quantum Conundrum

The new *Portal* from the maker(s) of *Portal*

PS3

It's *Portal*! Except it's not. *Quantum Conundrum* is a PSN-bound puzzle game where, excuse the boring technical moonspeak, you can switch between four different dimensions to alter the world around you. You can make objects fluffy which makes them lighter, hard which makes them heavier, slow down time or reverse gravity.

An example. You're in a room with furniture you can't lift, a pressure switch and a door that won't open. What do you do? You have to turn the world fluffy, grab the now lighter furniture, place it on a pressure switch and turn the world heavy. Furniture thumps down with a metallic clunk, pressure switch crunches underneath its new weight, door opens. Success! That's an easy example of how it works. Fans, multiple switches, lasers, power cords and glass floors soon complicate matters and this is before you start switching dimensions on the fly. It becomes the same brain-frying sorcery that

powered *Portal*, a single line of drool trickling down your chin as you stare at the screen locked into a confused, helpless trance.

Ah yes, *Portal*. What of that comparison then? Kim Swift was lead designer on *Portal* and is creative director here. And it shows. *Quantum Conundrum* has her fingerprints all over it, particularly with the same 'enter room, assess puzzle, scratch head, hit buttons, attempt solution' formula coming to the fore. The writing is just as lighthearted and also features an unseen voice guiding you through each room. The look is more cartoony than *Portal* – think the bright vivid colours of *Team Fortress 2* rather than *Portal*'s clean and muted aesthetic – but there's no denying the two share a lot in common. And that is a very, very Good Thing indeed, even with all the drooling.

Quantum Conundrum is being cooked up by Airtight Games, who can surprisingly be found at airtightgames.com. We know, we're shocked too.



WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- First-person puzzle game from *Portal*'s lead designer.
- Shifting dimensions is ruddy good fun.
- Puzzles start simple but difficulty quickly ramps up.
- Change looks depending on dimension used.

READ ME

Quantum Conundrum is a puzzle game that sees you escaping from a series of rooms by manipulating four different dimensions to shift boxes around. Trickier than it sounds.

CHANGE YOUR WORLD

Switching the environment changes the look

THE FLUFFY DIMENSION doesn't just make objects lighter. It also gives the world a 'soft' look, changing the textures for a homely material that looks like a sewn quilt. Even the paintings change, showing a soft, lighter side. Conversely, the harder dimension is one of dark colours and metallic textures. It's a cute touch that shows attention to detail.

RELEASE DATE: SEPTEMBER

Tekken Tag Tournament 2

Tekken it to the next level

PS3

Our wish list for *Tekken Tag Tournament 2*, based upon scrawled notes written down after revisiting *Tekken 6*, goes something like this. Tone Rage down so it's not as powerful. Bring back Kunimitsu. Do something drastic with Scenario Campaign. Get more toilet roll (ignore that, that was something else). More customisation items. Make the stages more interesting.

The good news is that Namco Bandai looks like it gets it. *Tekken Tag Tournament 2* is getting the big decisions and small details right. Rage was introduced in *Tekken 6* and gives players low on health an attack boost, a nice idea in theory but something that often felt unfair in favour of the losing player rather than making battles more exciting. This has been replaced by Netsu

Power for tag battles, which is almost the same except your partner gets the attack boost, so they have to be tagged in. A clever way of balancing it, really.

The stages can be broken in several places, depending on where it is you're fighting, when you smash your opponent through a wall or barrier. Your tag partner is waiting at the bottom to carry on the combo. Gimmicky, but good. Customisation items are ridiculous now and likely to be the main source of DLC and Scenario Campaign will be heavily boosted – more details next month. Namco even has every character talking their own language, so Lili speaks French, Christie speaks Portuguese and so on. Still, it has to be said – no Kunimitsu yet. Or toilet roll. Really should sort that out.

Capcom is publishing *Dragon's Dogma*. Check out its website at capcom-europe.com



● We won't be truly happy until we see Kunimitsu on the roster.



WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- Over 50 characters have been promised.
- Characters speak their own native language.
- Ridiculous array of customisation items.
- 'Netsu Power' to replace polarising Rage system.

READ ME

Sequel to the much-loved *Tekken Tag Tournament* entry to the series in 2000, which focuses on tag battles rather than one-versus-one play.

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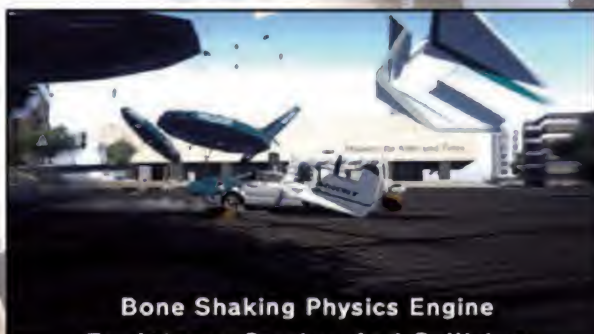
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PREVIEW



RELEASE DATE: SEPTEMBER

Epic Mickey 2: The Power Of Two

Taking the Mickey

PS3

You probably didn't play the first *Epic Mickey* game because it came out on Wii and only children own one of those. Fact.

No matter, for three reasons: the first is that it wasn't all that good, and the second is that the sequel is heading to PS3 (as well as Nintendo's early learning centre, obviously).

The third is that Warren Spector, *Who Can Do No Wrong* (he made the original *Deus Ex* you know) is behind it.

Not that we were really clamouring for a sequel to *Epic Mickey* – its interesting, paint-based mechanics were scuppered by repetition and a poor camera – but given that we're going to get it anyway we might as well check it out. Oh and of course it's made by Warren Spector, so we're contractually obliged to mention he's the guy who made *Deus Ex* a thousand years ago and will never, ever be allowed to forget it.



2

PARTNERS IN RHYME

In case you hadn't guessed by the subtitle (in which case, **Play** has some magic beans it would like to sell to you) *Epic Mickey 2* also has a two-player mode. It's drop-in, drop-out split-screen, with the second player taking over as Oswald The Lucky Rabbit. Disney buffs will recognise the character, and the two can combine their abilities:

for example Oswald can use his ears as a chopper to transport himself and Mickey around.

Although the game can be played completely in solo, there are areas that are restricted to two players. Which could be a problem if you've got no friends, as there's no online play. We don't really mind this, but there's probably going to be a lot of crying about it.

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?



- What makes this game great!?
- Warren Spector is making it.
- And he made *Deus Ex*.
- Which was *Deus Ex*.

READ ME

Epic Mickey 2: The Power Of Two is the sequel to *Epic Mickey*, which was a Wii-only game by the guy that made *Deus Ex*.

THE POWER OF 2

Mickey and new (old) character Oswald have to work together. Here's how.



Here's Oswald giving Mickey a lift with his helicopter ears.



You'll work together to solve puzzles, although the game can be played alone.

ELECTRIC SICKS

Mickey has his paintbrush. Oswald has an electronic device, together they team up to navigate the environment and solve the game's puzzles. It has the potential to lend a nice strategic element to the game, but developer Junction Point has some work to do to get it right. At the moment Oswald's attacks are quite unwieldy, thanks to imprecise controls, and besides that there's the general feeling that said puzzles are disappointingly easy. That said, things could have been so different: original design documents suggested that Oswald was to actually have his high-powered rifle that he used to kill President Kennedy with in 1964.

We're only joking of course. Kennedy was shot in '63.

3



4

MUSICAL NUMBER 2

What is more Disney than musical numbers? Nothing, and so *Epic Mickey 2* features, yes, musical numbers. Warren Spector – creator of *Deus Ex* – has gone on record as saying there's been a bit of resistance to this idea. Maybe the videogame world isn't ready for a mass-market musical? Sure, it's had *Rock Band* and *Guitar Hero*, but they're about performing. What Spector wants to do is very different, and we respect him for that. Details are thin on the ground, but just expect it to be classic Disney fare and you're probably close.



CAMERA SHY-TE

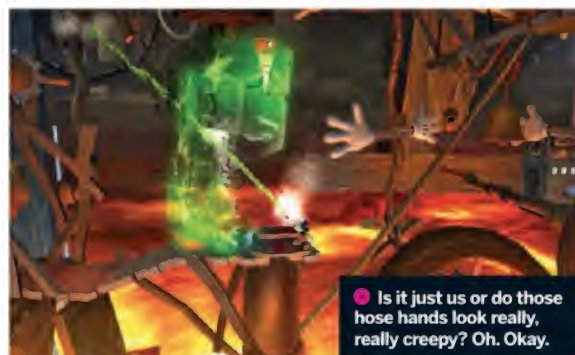
One of the main issues that knobbled the original *Epic Mickey* was that its camera was balls. Guess what: it's the same here, for PS3 at least. The Wii version is more fluid, and yes you can use a Move controller to make things easier on yourself, but at this stage the camera and the controls need work to bring them up to an acceptable level.

Good job then that Warren Spector himself (he made *Deus Ex* you know) has stated he's unhappy with the camera and that it is going to be changed. Which is good, because we couldn't have the creator of *Deus Ex* not knowing what he was doing. He created *Deus Ex*, after all.

5



● Oswald's got an electronic device instead of a paintbrush. We think he's winning.



● Is it just us or do those hose hands look really, really creepy? Oh. Okay.

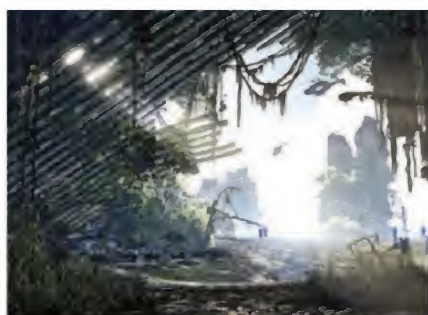


● Ah, the old 'turn things and something happens' mechanic.

PREVIEW



● The bow and arrow could add some interesting tactical considerations.

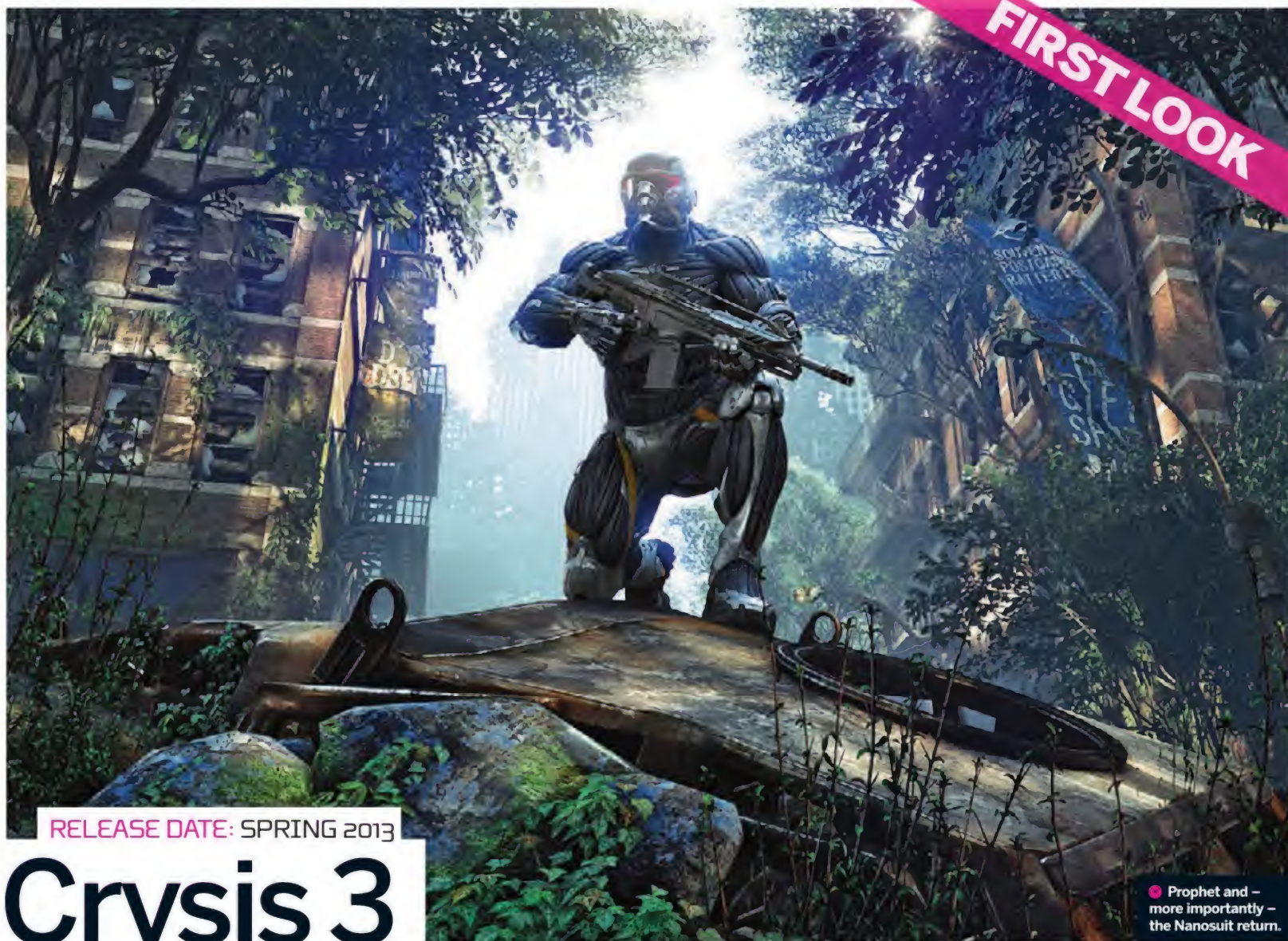


● Bad guys aren't just guys – they're weird bugger alien things, too.

BIO-DOME 2

This time with less Richard Morgan

FOLLOWING ON FROM the second game, *Crysis 3* takes place in 2047 and sees returning protagonist Prophet taking the fight back to the invading forces of the Ceph – as well as the mysterious (and, of course, evil) Cell Corporation. But why take a turn for Pauly Shore and *Bio-Dome*? Well these structures, erected by the corporation, act as quarantined havens to protect the populace from the dangers of the rather messed up world around them. Inside them, the world has continued to grow over the cities that were already ruined – oh, and it turns out the whole setup isn't as innocent as once thought. Well, we did say Cell was evil.



RELEASE DATE: SPRING 2013

Crysis 3

Prophet and – more importantly – the Nanosuit return.

The city is alive, the city is expanding, living in the city can be demanding



Somebody sat down and sifted through the reactions to *Crysis 2*, picking up on two general themes popping up again and again. One half screamed angrily, frothy-mouthed and red-faced as furious gamers tend to be, complaining that the move away from a jungle setting hurt Crytek's 2011 sequel. The other half, probably not quite as furiously as the previous lot, planted its flags firmly in the camp that said 'actually this city stuff is pretty cool'. EA had a dilemma: who to side with? Who to please?

Turns out the answer is simple: both. *Crysis 3*'s action will once again be in the city of apples ('New York'), except with one minor ('major') difference – it's totally overgrown with lush, thick greenery. The urban jungle has had a more traditional jungle facelift.

If you consider the whys and hows of this factor important, get

yo' ass to the boxout for more information. What we feel is of vastly more import is the fact this opens the mechanics in the game up to all-new approaches.

Combining the freeform sandbox approach of the original – which allowed players to stalk their prey as if they are Arnie's greatest foe himself – with the more rigid, urban environments of the second is sure to make for some exciting hunts and unique design choices. One minute you could be playing whack-a-mole with guns in an office corridor before jumping out of a window into some treetop-based hide and seek (note: both games mentioned involve guns and killing).

It's an approach we can see nullifying a fair few of the complaints we levelled at the second game, hopefully bringing it closer in line with the superior original while at the same time allowing for something different.

And, of course, not entirely backing down on the city setting Crytek clearly worked so hard on.

Of course, it's the Nanosuit that plays the biggest part in the *Crysis* series, helping as it does to bring the series out of the realms of 'just another shooter' and into something offering tactics, depth, and the ability to throw whole men at helicopters.

Added to the usual complement of speed, strength, cloaking et al will be some other, as-yet unknown features, and extra weaponry. Yes, we're talking about the *Rambo*-style bow Prophet has co-opted in order to take out the human and alien scourge. Combining this seemingly backward technology with the abilities of the Nanosuit and a similar upgrade system to *Crysis 2*? That sounds like a recipe for a Fun Time, especially in a sandboxy world of conventional cities turned into teeming swamps,

flowing rivers and a literal (less-urban) jungle.

There's also mention of multiplayer, which comes as a boost – especially when you consider *Crysis 2*'s online mode (which avoided any need for an online pass, lest we forget) was rather unfairly overlooked by gamers as a whole. Crytek UK – formerly Free Radical – is once again at work on multiplayer, meaning it might be more of the same. It would probably make sense for a simple update of what was offered last time around rather than a totally new experience. Then again, the studio might well want to start all over again if it sees *Crysis 2*'s efforts as a failure.

It's got our attention, as anything by Crytek tends to do, but we'll have to wait and see if the studio can make something that genuinely impresses us. The original (when re-released) we enjoyed. The second game faltered in numerous respects. The third one has to be special – the loyalty of the series' fans alone deserves it.

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- It's always fun to be the Predator.
- A potential return for some of PS3's most overlooked multiplayer.
- A bow and arrow = potential for awesomecity.
- Crytek definitely knows how to make games that make us coo at their looks.

READ ME

Crysis 3 is powered by CryEngine 3, which makes for a nice kind of 3-based symmetry with the whole tech aspect of things.

Crysis 3 is being developed by Crytek. Check out http://crysis.ea.com/en_GB/crysis3 for more details.

PREVIOUSLY ON SPIDER-MAN

How good (or bad) were the last three games?

FOR SUCH A beloved character, poor old Peter Parker hasn't starred in all that many good videogames. Let's have a look back at the last three to see how they stacked up, and what this new entry has to do to better them.



SPIDER-MAN: EDGE OF TIME

REVIEWED: 212 • SCORE: 38% • DEVELOPER: BEENOX

A terrible, linear and downright boring game, this not only had Spidey cooped up in a load of small rooms fighting dull enemies, but also featured one of the most self-indulgently toss intros of all time. The swinging mechanics were good, but this was garbage.



SPIDER-MAN: SHATTERED DIMENSIONS

REVIEWED: 197 • SCORE: 69% • DEVELOPER: BEENOX

A good-looking but sadly inconsistent game that sees you playing as four different versions of Spider-Man from across the many comics: classic, Noir, 2099 and Ultimate Spider-Man.



SPIDER-MAN: WEB OF SHADOWS

REVIEWED: 173 • SCORE: 55% • DEVELOPER: TREYARCH

Sandbox, yes, fun: not really. A good idea made frustrating thanks to a wonky camera and lazy missions. A shame, because it starts very well. Still, something for Beenox to reference when building its own Manhattan



RELEASE DATE: JUNE

Looks good, right? 50 notes says it doesn't in-game.

The Amazing Spider-Man

Does whatever an average developer can



Broadly speaking games based on the *Spider-Man* franchise are pretty uninspiring. Apart from one or two standouts the only thing the games are good for is showing developers how not to adapt a comic-book hero for videogames.

So it's with hope in our heart that we look forward to *The Amazing Spider-Man*. That may seem counterintuitive, but think about it: if they make enough of these games then one will be really good, right?

The 'they' in question is developer Beenox, who made the last *Spider-Man* game, *Edge Of Time*. Which was rubbish. But hey! It also made

one – *Shattered Dimensions* – which was okay. No prizes for guessing which camp we'd like this movie tie-in to fall into.

On the strength of the initial info things look... alright. Set after the events of the movie you'll be swinging through Manhattan to your heart's content, which is obviously a plus, but Beenox has obviously been paying attention to the competition as well.

Yes, of course we mean *Arkham City*. *The Amazing Spider-Man* features self-contained areas of New York that task you with either stealthing your way through or smacking up everyone in there, not

unlike everyone's favourite mentally ill billionaire. It seems Beenox has taken some strides to ensure players feel more like Spider-Man than Peter Parker.

Also present is the 'Web Rush' mechanic. Like *Batman's* Detective Mode it highlights areas of interest to the player, but instead of being clues here they're more like recommended actions, signified with a ghost image of Spidey. By 'rushing' to these in sequence you'll pull off the move signified by the ghost, be it offensive or navigational. If the system works properly it could introduce a nice flow to both navigating Manhattan and taking on enemies.

Which is good, right? Yes. It's not like we take pleasure in giving *Spider-Man* games bad scores, because we know they can be good. So, Beenox, you know what to do.

The Amazing Spider-Man is being developed by Beenox. Check them out at www.beenox.com/en

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- Web Rush mechanic sounds interesting.
- Combat mechanics sound interesting.
- It can't be as bad as the last one.
- It's not based on the movie, but around it.

READ ME

After its last effort, the dreadful *Edge Of Time*, got the review scores it deserved, we're hoping that Beenox has learnt a few lessons. Such as: don't open your game with a ten-minute crawling sequence.

Use the **SciFiNow** flowchart to find out...





RELEASE DATE: SEPTEMBER

Borderlands 2

Lands of the free and the home of the brave

PS3 Is it fair to say that people want *Borderlands 2* so much they'd willingly deck their own mothers for it? Certainly. We said it, it must be true.

Besides, *Borderlands 2* is looking very good indeed. It's been a long time since the first game was released and kicked the asses of both public and press alike, but developer Gearbox – who you may also know as the developer attempting to make *Aliens: Colonial Marines*' dev cycle the longest in history – has used the intervening years, and the feedback that came with them, wisely.

We'll come to the new gameplay mechanics in a bit, but first let's

concentrate on the game's art style, which has undergone a few changes while still being magnificent. Here at *Play* we don't really understand why some devs insist on attempting to achieve photorealism (especially when the budget's clearly not there).

Enemies aren't your average cardboard cut-outs... Gearbox is proud of the new AI routines it's been creating

Better to 'do a *Borderlands*': switch to a heavily stylised look and hope the core game still appeals.

Which it did – who'd have thought that people like shooting stuff – and

it's improved upon here. Whereas the first game unsurprisingly had a heavy desert/industrial influence, here the team has taken the time to make sure the player sees a bit more colour.

With environments now taking in Icelandic influences, there should

be a welcome break from the all-encompassing desert hues of the last game. It's not going to turn into *Halo* or anything, but a bit of variety is welcome.

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

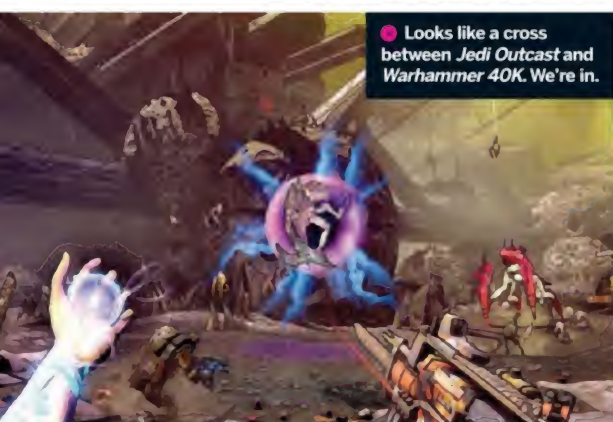
- Four player co-op.
- Tweaked mechanics = more fun.
- More guns than RoboCop.
- It's more *Borderlands*, people.

READ ME

The sequel to 2009's breakout hit, *Borderlands 2* is promising to take everything that made its predecessor successful and up the ante. They all say that though, don't they?

Four-player co-op is still a huge draw. LOOK AT IT.

Looks like a cross between *Jedi Outcast* and *Warhammer 40K*. We're in.





● This is how Ian imagines his walk to work to be.



● Decisions, decisions.



So with the visuals getting a bit of a spruce up, what about the all-important gameplay? Relax, it's still good. Better than before, in fact, especially when you're gunning around with a partner or three and generally making more mess in the desert than the American government. As ever firepower is at the top of the agenda, and *Borderlands* has even more guns, and even more combinations of weapons and ammo, than before.

Which is natural sequel territory: releasing a shooter with less guns is tantamount to slapping your buyers in the face with a pink handkerchief. The number that Gearbox has been shouting about is 'thousands' of gun combinations. Be thankful you're not the guy who had to count.

Your enemies aren't your average cardboard cut-outs either. Gearbox is proud of the new AI routines it's been creating, and with such devastating weaponry on offer we're pleased to see it's been working on your foes' intelligence. After all, it's no fun fighting enemies that pose no challenge, even if you've got the world's best guns.

One thing's for sure, *Borderlands 2*'s antagonists have the brawn to go with any brain they may have acquired. Between monstrous mechs that transform into smaller, more nimble vehicles and insectoid rivals that boast a life-cycle, we're looking forward to putting 10,000 bullets in every last one of them.

The only thing left to improve then is the grinding nature of *Borderlands 2*'s play. Don't get us wrong: we're aware that grinding is integral to an experience such as this. But after a while there's the feeling you've seen and done it all.

Not so here, if Gearbox is to be believed. The looting/shooting gameplay persists, but now there's more variety and dynamism to them: missions will come up on the fly while you're undertaking different tasks, there's loads of radio chatter to keep you informed and there will also be branching missions.

So, would you still deck your mum for *Borderlands 2*? Probably. We know what you're like.

Borderlands 2 is being developed by Gearbox Software. Check them out at www.gearboxsoftware.com

● Everything's been improved, from the visuals to the gameplay.



TWO TRIBES GO TO WAR

The choice is yours

BORDERLANDS 2'S PRIMARY GAMEPLAY may still revolve around shooting people – a lot – and then robbing their corpses, but you'll sometimes also have a smattering of choice as to what you do with goods you find that goes beyond upgrading weapons. One example given is completing a mission and finding rude pictures of Moxxi as your reward. Two parties are interested in these pictures, and it's up to you who gets them. Not earth-shattering, but should add an element of choice to proceedings, especially with Gearbox promising branching missions and on-the-fly objectives.



IDENTITY CRISIS

RELEASE DATE: JULY

Anarchy Reigns

Bayonetta meets Power Stone. What else do you need?



What if the enemies in *Bayonetta* were controlled by a second player?

That was presumably the pitch put to Sega by producer Atsushi Inaba, before he kicked his feet up on the table and lit a victory cigar. Because, you know, what *if*? That's the question *Anarchy Reigns* asks and it's gone far enough to answer the question that you can now play as Bayonetta, the high-heeled star from Platinum's breakout classic.

Which is why it's strange to see almost no buzz about *Anarchy Reigns*. You'd hear a louder hum from the street lights on Old Kent Road at night than you would from the interwebs for Platinum's latest crunch-'em-up. Perhaps the blame can be attributed to the lack of local multiplayer or split-screen, putting a dampener on the 'hey, it's modern *Power Stone*!' label. Perhaps more blame can be thrown Konami's way, with *Metal Gear Rising: Revengeance* dazzling Inaba and co, leaving *Anarchy Reigns* fighting for attention. Yet the most blame can be attributed to the confused identity at the heart of *Anarchy Reigns*.

This isn't to say it's a bad game. Platinum knows how to do combat better than most developers dream

and there looks to be a dizzying, intricate and explosive system powering the fisticuffs and special moves that make up the brawling in *Anarchy Reigns* and its arena battles. Rather, it's one that's proved a hard sell. Sega has pushed the multiplayer aspect yet the trailers thus far have shown off single-player content. Platinum has slowly started peeling back layers from the storyline, though until the review stage it's hard to judge how clearly any plot can be woven into an arena brawler like *Anarchy Reigns*. Sadly, it's even harder to care.

What is needed is a multiplayer demo to bring *Anarchy Reigns*' unique... well, anarchy, in front of PlayStation 3 owners where they can't avoid it. We've fallen in love with the multiplayer mayhem in *Anarchy Reigns* which is excessive yet accessible. We want others to fall in love, too. The only way that will happen is for less storyline trailers, more multiplayer demos, which at least show off the promise of what happens if the enemies in *Bayonetta* were controlled by another player. Make it happen, Sega.

Platinum Games is cooking up this tasty morsel. Check out the trailers and assets over at maxanarchy.jp



You'll be able to play as the awesome Bayonetta.



Anarchy Reigns has struggled for attention alongside *MGS: Revengeance*.

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- Lots of weird characters.
- It's like modern *Power Stone*. Sort of.
- Not enough arena combat games.
- It's by the flippin' great Platinum Games.

READ ME

Arena brawler that riffs on *Power Stone* and *Bayonetta*. If you remember Sega curio *Virtual On*, imagine that but with bizarre, eccentric characters replacing the robots.

LET'S GET TECHNICAL

Hit the dojo and practise

ANARCHY REIGNS IS going to be more than a button-masher. That's the plan anyway. Just as *Bayonetta* had its own 'training mode' in the loading screens, *Anarchy Reigns* will have its own training mode to practise moves and combos. We know you can tech any throw attempts, a mechanic more commonly seen in fighting games. What other wonders is *Anarchy Reigns* hiding in its engine? Maybe wake-up dragon punch for panicked noobs to spam. Go on..





Fans can take on the roles of legendary characters Spock and Captain Kirk.

RELEASE DATE: Q1 2013

Star Trek

Not your typical movie-based game, honest



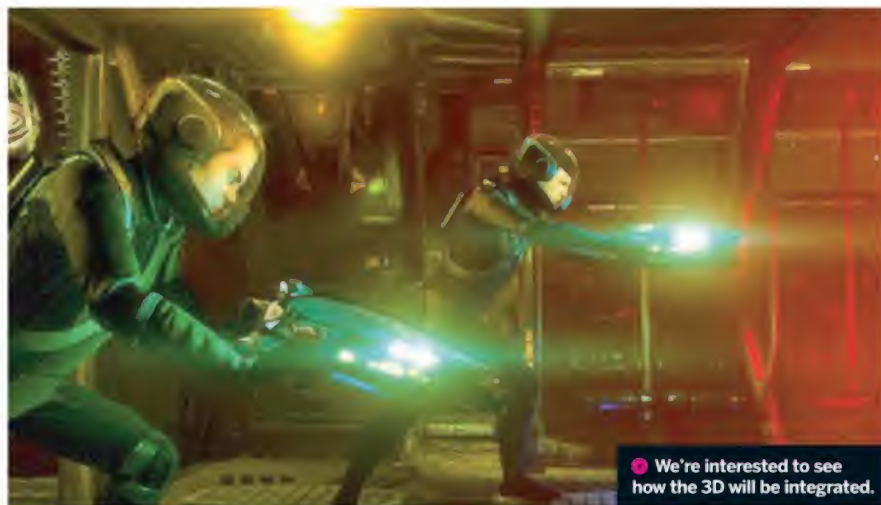
"This is not your typical movie-based game." So says Steve Sinclair, creative director at Digital Extremes, the studio responsible for hammering the *Star Trek* game into shape. Unfortunately that is every bit your typical developer quote, which can be found on the same line as 'built from the ground up' and 'we listened to feedback from the community' on the Games Development Cliche bingo card. So it's good that Sinclair offers an explanation why. "The reason for that is we were green-lit on the game before they green-lit the movie. Because the time it takes for them to make a good movie is about half of what is needed to make a good game. We've been working on *Star Trek* for quite some time."

It shows. *Star Trek* is a co-op third-person shooter, drawing in elements of *Mass Effect* (sci-fi theme, laser guns, big explosions) and *Gears Of War* (persistent co-op, chunky gunfire, big explosions). "When we showed this to Bob Orci, who wrote the 2009 movie and is writing in the next one, he

said, 'thank you, thank you,' explained Sinclair. "And I thought, 'oh cool, he's thanking me for brushing my teeth this morning or holding the door [open for him]'. But, he was thanking me because we've retained the levity of *Star Trek* that defines the TV show and films. That's something really important to us: there are enough grim shooter action-adventure games out there. This one balances that with a really interesting interplay between two characters."

Those two characters, if you haven't seen the film, are Captain Kirk and Spock. They have the movie likeness and the scenario we see has them returning to the Enterprise after exploring with an away team, only to find their ship trapped in energy beams. Thus begins the mission to reboard and save the crew, with a rollercoaster of coverfire, co-op, running and those big explosions.

Digital Extremes, formerly of *Unreal Tournament* and *Dark Void* duties, is behind *Star Trek*. Check out their progress at digitalextremes.com



We're interested to see how the 3D will be integrated.



3D!

Both players can play with 3D

IT'S NOT JUST co-op for *Star Trek*. Nope, even better than that is 'sync'd co-op', which Steve Sinclair described as "kind of a first." So if you're rich and you have a 3DTV, you can play 3D co-op. With your rich friends, obviously. But all rich people have rich friends. Is that how it works? We'll ponder that one while eating our toenails for lunch because we couldn't even afford Tesco Value cheese sandwiches.



WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- Persistent co-op with James Kirk and Spock.
- Based on forthcoming 2013 *Star Trek* movie.
- 3D options for both characters.
- Surprisingly, it actually looks pretty damn good.

READ ME

Star Trek will be based on the forthcoming untitled movie, which is currently being filmed and is scheduled for release in May next year.

5

MODERN GAMES THAT OWE THEIR EXISTENCE TO RETRO TITLES

Daring to be different or making an abstract game might result in positive reviews or a cult following, but chances are the developer won't get a lot of sales. Just look at *Ico* and *Okami*. There are many games out there today that pull in millions of fans, massive piles of cash and high review scores. However, very few of them are original. So we decided to track down the inspiration for some of the biggest franchises around today, and to give credit where it's due.



RESIDENT EVIL 6

■ Owes its existence to: Sweet Home

But hold on, *Alone In The Dark* created survival horror in 1992, right? Sure, *Alone In The Dark* delivered the horror, control scheme and mansion setting that – on the surface – seemed to directly influence the creation of Capcom's *Resident Evil* series, but in fact, *Resident Evil* was originally pitched as a sequel to a 1989 NES game called *Sweet Home*.

Sweet Home was developed by Capcom alongside a Japanese horror movie of the same name. It followed a team of five people who enter a deserted mansion in the middle of the woods and become trapped. The team then has to work together while battling monsters to escape.

One of the characters has a lockpick, which obviously makes her a master at unlocking doors. *Sweet Home* also has inventory management, a mansion setting, monsters, a real horror vibe, puzzles, gory, collectable diary entries and more. Not to mention loading screens whenever your team goes through a door.

So while *Sweet Home* did influence *Resident Evil* and its countless sequels internally at Capcom, *Alone In The Dark* took what it attempted to do and made it come to life in a 3D format. It also wasn't half bad too, just don't mention the 2008 reboot, or the Uwe Boll movie.

5



CALL OF DUTY

■ Owes its existence to: MOH: Allied Assault

After the first *Medal Of Honor* dropped on PSone in 1999, EA's franchise became the de facto force in FPS console gaming, sparking a surge in military-themed shooters across most formats. The third in the series was *Medal Of Honor: Allied Assault*, launched in 2002. It's also fondly remembered as being the one that was absolutely amazing.

Praise shouldn't go directly to EA for *Medal Of Honor: Allied Assault*, as it was actually developed by the now defunct studio 2015. Shortly after *Allied Assault*'s release, a large chunk of 2015's payroll splintered off, took their expertise and used it to form Infinity Ward.

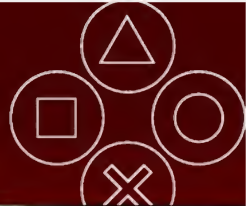
Originally consisting of 22 ex-2015 staffers, Infinity Ward's first title was the PC-only smash *Call Of Duty*. Not only did the original *Call Of Duty* make EA's subsequent *Medal Of Honor* games pale by comparison, it cemented the future of the franchise.

With Zampella and West leaving Infinity Ward with a huge chunk of staff to form Respawn Entertainment, it seems that history is repeating itself once again. Say what you will about the *Call of Duty* series, but few can deny its immeasurable success, all of which was born out of a gutsy move that could have ended horribly. If you've ever enjoyed a *Call Of Duty* game, you have *Medal Of Honor* to thank.



4

ORIGINS OF FIVE MODERN GAME SERIES



3

TOMB RAIDER

■ Owes its existence to: Rick Dangerous

We're talking about Rick Dangerous, star of the 1989 Amiga platformer of the same name. Rick was a little adventurer chap who looked like Indiana Jones, and he spent his days rummaging around ancient tombs in search of relics.

Rick was a posh British agent who journeyed to the Amazon in search of a lost tribe. Along the way, players would have to help Rick avoid traps, shoot bad guys, solve puzzles and climb around the perilous environment.

Rick Dangerous sounds a lot like *Tomb Raider* without the cleavage, 3D visuals, or hot pants. Lara is also a posh Brit, she too likes to shoot enemies, and she does everything else we just listed above. Somewhere along the line, is it possible that the makers of *Tomb Raider* ripped off *Rick Dangerous*, a game that many retro fans consider to be a true classic? Nope, because they were both created by the same studio, Core Design. Oh snap!

Word on the street is that *Tomb Raider* was originally pitched as a 3D remake of *Rick Dangerous*, and while that remains an unconfirmed rumour, it's also widely documented that the initial lead character was male, not the Lara Croft we know today. Coincidence?



2

GRAND THEFT AUTO

■ Owes its existence to: APB

APB is the name of a fun arcade game developed by Atari and released in 1987. It follows a rookie cop called Bob as he hunts criminals in his squad car. It's a game where the cars look just like the vehicles in *Grand Theft Auto*, using the same top-down control system, and racking up massive cash bonuses. *Grand Theft Auto* has APB's fingerprints all over it.

Jump forward to 1995 when respected Scottish game developer DMA Design was working on its new game concept, a title called *Race N' Chase*. The game would see players getting behind the wheel of their car and hitting the city streets to commit crimes.

There were no on-foot missions, and it was a multiplayer game focused on crashing into other players and raising hell. The game would be set across New York, Venice and Miami, and missions would see you doing bank robberies, racing and a demolition derby mode. You could get out on foot to steal another car if your vehicle got trashed, but that's as far as it goes. This was essentially an extension of APB, and after some revision, DMA Design changed the name from *Race N' Chase* to *Grand Theft Auto*, and a legend was born.



1

SQUARE ENIX

■ Owes everything it has done to: Final Fantasy

You might think 'Well, yeah, obviously!' but don't forget that Square (or Squaresoft as it was known back then) didn't just make *Final Fantasy*. In fact the first *Final Fantasy* came out four years after the studio was formed.

Instead, Squaresoft made games like *Dragon Slayer*, *King's Knight* and the NES game *Rad Racer*. Depending on who you ask, Squaresoft is said to have been perilously close to bankruptcy in 1987, and desperately needed a hit game. Squaresoft's main planner Hironobu Sakaguchi rounded up seven of the studio's best developers and began thrashing out an idea for their next NES game.

Due to the tough situation now facing the company, the team decided to call their new RPG *Final Fantasy*, because it could have very well been their last game together.

At launch, only 200,000 *Final Fantasy* cartridges were made, but production had to be doubled to meet the overwhelming demand from gamers. Chances are you know the rest of the story. *Final Fantasy* has become a gaming and cultural phenomenon and has generated a whopping amount of cash for Square Enix. Although Sakaguchi is no longer with the studio, his legacy lives on as strong as ever.

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REVIEWS

We play games and give them a score

RELEASE DATE: 25 MAY

Dragon's Dogma

A surprisingly literal title, all things considered



DETAILS

Publisher
Capcom
Developer
Capcom
Price
£49.99
Players
1
Genre
RPG
Age Rating
18
Website
dragonsdogma.com
Twitter
@DragonsDogmaCap
Facebook
facebook.com/capcommunity

PS3

It's somewhat unfair for a game to have so many comparisons thrown its way before it's even out. It's necessary to help people out and let them know what the game plays like, but you can't help but feel it leaves the actual product hamstrung on release. People expect so much more than it can provide, or an experience far removed from what it actually is.

In the case of *Dragon's Dogma* it's less the fact it was compared to *Skyrim*, *Dark Souls*,

The pawn system is the hook for *Dragon's Dogma*, and it's as interesting as it is underwhelming

Monster Hunter, *Shadow Of The Colossus* et al and more the fact that *Skyrim*, *Dark Souls*, *Monster Hunter*, *Shadow Of The Colossus* et al exist. That's four games that do elements of what *Dragon's Dogma* does and do them a hell of a lot better.

The situation goes thusly: you are The Arisen. Attacked by a dragon and with your heart stolen, it's a case of doing things for people ("kill 10 goblins!" "okay, because that makes sense!")

before you can get said pumper back. Thrown into a large, open world you are accompanied by up to three 'pawns' and are free to take your time or power through as you see fit.

The pawn system is the hook for *Dragon's Dogma*, and it's as interesting as it is underwhelming. While the idea of having three companions – one created yourself and two that can be swapped in and out (see 'Gotta catch 'em all' boxout) – and being able to tailor them to your needs, seeing the benefit of them learning new skills and ordering them about as necessary is a good one, the implementation is... lacking.

We'll ignore the way they never shut up and that, in one of those annoying design decisions that some won't actually mind, you have to micromanage 90 per cent of their lives for them. The real issues are with the AI itself, which is lacking. The commands that can be doled out are limited to three, seriously limiting strategic applications. Partners offer little beyond acting as tanks or cannon fodder thanks to the minimal control you have over them and it struck us repeatedly that this is a system much more suited to human allies. It

GOTTA CATCH 'EM ALL

Or not. Up to you, really

ONLINE INTEGRATION IN *Dragon's Dogma* stretches as far as allowing you to trade and share pawns with other users. It's a handy system for increasing rewards and the amount of rare items you get, as well as picking up AI team-mates with greater knowledge of quests, areas and enemies. But it's also wafer-thin and very easy to ignore, offering very little in the way of necessary benefits. There's the obvious thrill of collecting that those of an obsessive nature will get, but there's no room to develop or customise pawns other than your main one, so the others just feel like transient, pointless entities.



was brought up many times before *Dragon's Dogma* was released, but why this game is single-player only we simply do not know.

That wouldn't be so bad, but we can't help but feel the game is seriously lacking as a direct result of being single-player only. Human team-mates would mean actual strategic combat instead of this hasty, unclear and inaccurate whacking action we are instead presented with.

Combat itself – the main draw of the game – is seriously all over the place. Clunky is the main word that springs to mind, with a lack of easily defined targeting holding back most character types and a general sense you don't have the control you require to take on opponents in the tactical manner *Dragon's Dogma* expects of you. In theory it should be wonderful and strategic, seeing each character type work to their strengths. In practice it will boil down to headless chickens running and flailing, getting KO'd and necessitating being revived by a player character too scared of





going anywhere near that Cyclops that can kill them in one hit. It isn't exactly exciting.

And as for the *Shadow Of The Colossus* comparisons that cropped up in earlier previews? Well, you and your pawns can indeed grab onto enemies and smack them upside the head while mounting them, but it's not the most effective of systems. Rather than feeling useful, it feels pointless – you'll only actually need it in a few bigger fights, and you'll use it out of choice sparingly at most.

Difficulty is not by itself a Bad Thing. Back to the *Dark Souls* comparisons – that's a game that gets difficulty. You fail, it's your fault. *Dragon's Dogma* seems to have read the first part of that statement: you just fail. Unavoidable, random strikes out of nowhere; no ability to dodge as standard; no blocking at all for certain character classes; huge, non-signposted difficulty spikes that see the player taken out in one hit; AI companions who seem happier to pick flowers than actually help; the lack of logic in a world

where you can revive team-mates but they can't revive you – the list goes on.

Dragon's Dogma isn't terrible. In fact, it brings to mind the other recent release of *Armored Core V*: it's utterly compulsive if you let it be, but from a technological perspective it's lacking, and from a fun perspective it just doesn't provide much. More of a slog than an adventure, it will no doubt succeed on the back of offering a *Resident Evil 6* demo in the box, rather than through any misguided belief it's actually much good.

Ian Dransfield

VERDICT

A clunky, confused mess of a game that simply doesn't know what it wants to be. There's comfort in how compulsive it can be, but that factor doesn't magically turn *Dragon's Dogma* into anything other than a flawed, dull and unfair experience.

48%



Or you could try



The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim Issue 212
A more enjoyable, wondrous way to wander aimlessly.
With added fast travel. **93%**



RELEASE DATE: OUT NOW



● The graphics aren't great. As you can see.

Top Gun: Hard Lock

Ride into the danger zzzzzzzzzzzzzz



PS3

PS3 *Top Gun: Hard Lock* may be set in the present – you're one of a new wave of elite naval aviators fresh out of the eponymous Academy – but its tone is set firmly in 1986. *That* cheesy guitar theme plays at any available opportunity, the voiceovers embody the very essence of Eighties action movie chauvinism, and there's a grainy filter placed over proceedings, ostensibly to make it all feel a little more authentically 'Top Gun', but in actuality just making it seem like someone's wiped Val Kilmer's post-volleyball sweat over the screen.

DETAILS

Publisher
Headstrong Games
Developer
505 Games
Price
£29.99
Players
1-16
Genre
Flight sim
Age Rating
12
Website
topgungame.com
Twitter
@505_Games
Facebook
facebook.com/
TopGunHardLock

Get behind a target and lock on and you'll go on-rails, controlling just the aiming of your craft

The actual game mechanics are more 2011. October 2011 to be more precise, when *Ace Combat: Assault Horizon* was released. *Hard Lock* pinches the Close Range Assault mode from Namco Bandai's game, and then manages to mess it up. Get behind a target and lock on and you'll go on-rails, controlling just the aiming



- Homoerotic innuendo gives it that real *Top Gun* feel.

of your craft. In order to stay on the tail of your opponent – or evade one of yours – you need to constantly perform QTE-style analogue stick presses. Doing so correctly results in nice-looking Immelmann turns, loop-de-loops and other aerial acrobatics, but they're the result of you doing little other than holding the sticks in the direction prompted.

Like *Assault Horizon* these sections do admittedly intensify the action to some degree, keeping *Hard Lock* from falling into the age old flight sim problem that is chasing dots on the horizon, but they grow dull *fast*. QTEs hardly make for riveting play, and *Hard Lock* has little else up its sleeve. You'll do most of the stuff you do in all flight sims – bomb ground targets, fly under enemy radar, protect civilian flights – and some stuff you don't – engage in dogfights in the middle of lightning storms –

but it does little to disguise that at the core of it all, *Hard Lock* is just repeating the same trick over and over. Lock onto enemy. Press sticks in the indicated direction. Fire missile. Repeat.

There are some extra modes, but they do little to help. The wave-based Danger Zone repeats the same core problems with the campaign but in their own confined mode, and the online and co-op offerings, while fun, are difficult to get into because there's barely anyone else playing.

If you took *Ace Combat: Assault Horizon* and relegated all story to bad voice acting, removed any challenge in the flying and nullified whatever good Close Range Assault did for the genre by turning it into a Simon Says QTE mini-game, then you'd end up with this (oh – and don't forget to rub Kilmer's pits across the screen). We still think there's hope left in the flight sim genre, but none of it is coming from this: a game about as convincing as Goose's dodgy moustache.

Chris McMahon

VERDICT

Top Gun: Hard Lock isn't terrible – it even manages to be exciting at times. But whatever glimmer of hope that might suggest is dulled by the endless, hopeless reliance on a central QTE mechanic that's old by the second mission.

45%



- Remember that bit in *Top Gun* with the dubstep? No... neither do we.



Or you
could try



Ace Combat: Assault Horizon Issue 211
Does what *Top Gun: Hard Lock* does
but 33% better **78%**

XBOX 360

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RELEASE DATE: OUT NOW

Sniper Elite V2

Headshot! Double Kill!
Unstoppable? Nah



DETAILS

Publisher
505 Games
Developer
Rebellion
Price
£39.99
Players
1-2
Genre
Action
Age Rating
15
Website
sniperelitev2.com
Twitter
@SniperEliteV2
Facebook
facebook.com/
sniperelitev2

PS3

If you're looking around the images on this page, asking yourself where the screenshot of a bullet shooting through Hitler's eye with gore-nographic intensity is, then stop. It's not here. Turns out one of the main marketing points for Rebellion's latest entry into the series – killing the man himself – is actually pre-order DLC. If only the allies knew that, eh? Maybe they didn't have a PSN account.

Disappointment at not being able to shoot *that* moustache off aside, *Sniper Elite V2* is a strangely addictive yet utterly shabby experience from front to back. The game's tutorial kicks off this contrast quite nicely, being broken down into fractured, irritating little instructions that highlight the depressing lack of polish before you get anywhere near shooting people's brains into chunky bits of offal.

When you do, however, it's excellent, in a 'Now That's What I Call Early 2000s Cinema Tropes' kind of way. Specific kill shots from your rifle are rewarded with the bullet flying in slo-mo before showing an x-ray shot of the bullet entering (and exiting) soldiers' bodies to grotesque effect. We dare you not to wince when you hit someone in the eye.

Shame then that it seems Rebellion has lifted its other mechanics from the same era as its cinematic touches. For a game called



Sniper Elite, you spend a lot of time running and gunning – badly, it turns out: the engine creaks both visually and mechanically – and in most stages you've got to make a mad haphazard dash through the level, or snipe *everyone*, before you can get to your goal.

It is possible to use stealth to navigate your way through certain stages, but only after multiple trial (and lots of error) runs, mainly because your enemies alternate between displaying either superhuman senses or outright stupidity. The thrill of this game, as the title makes clear, should be sneaking into position before executing the perfect kill. Here, you shoot everything, and while the kill shots are superb they should be meted out in a far more exclusive manner. Combine this logical failing with ropery graphics, poor controls and general repetition and you've got

a game that succeeds in the executions, but fails in its attempts to make you think that they matter. There's never the feeling that you're plotting out the perfect kill, or even the less-than-perfect one, just making your way through a series of soon-to-be dead bodies before you add one more to the list and the mission ends.

Steve Burns

VERDICT

The core mechanic is nicely done, but when it's packaged around a run-'n'-gunner with about as much stealth as *Commando* it's impossible not to be disappointed. Better than Rebellion's recent fare, but still not great.

52%





RELEASE DATE: OUT NOW

Crash Time 4: The Syndicate



The Usual Nonsense



Publisher dtp Entertainment Developer Syntetic
Price £39.99 Players 1-8 Genre Driving Age Rating 12
Website crashtime4.com Twitter @PQube
Facebook facebook.com/dtpentertainment

Crash Time 4: The Syndicate exists, and for that we are grateful. Not because the game itself is good – it's comically poor – but because it made us laugh uncontrollably at least a couple of times, and constantly amused us for the remainder.

Let's start with the story, which underpins all the driving and crashing and laughing. Set in Germany, it sees you take on the role of an Autobahn Cop protecting Cologne from the evil Syndicate. Which is brilliant, obviously – we can imagine stumbling across a TV show of the same name on Dave or something – and things get even better when you hear the interplay between you, your partner and the other characters.

It's wonderfully bizarre, especially when your character sounds exactly like Derek Zoolander. We haven't heard voice acting this bad since the original *Resident Evil*, and every time someone talks it's hard not to cackle like a madman.

Then there's the fact that it seems intentionally user-unfriendly: just

starting a mission is painfully convoluted, navigating the open world still requires you to pass through checkpoints, one mission started with us heading into oncoming traffic and the frame rate is terrible. The driving model is okay, if a bit floaty, and although it may be one of the funniest videogames ever made we suggest you stay clear and simply watch the best bits online. Which reminds us: during a high-speed pursuit, we – the police – slammed into the back of a Mini, exploding it and presumably killing everyone inside. We thought there'd be repercussions, but then realised most of the cars don't have drivers. Of course!

Steve Burns

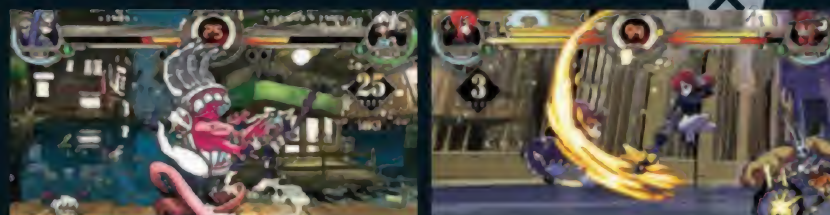
VERDICT

Rubbish, but so bizarre as to be fun. That said, we wouldn't recommend paying real money for this, but if you happen across it in a drainage ditch take it home and play it.

37%



PSN reviews



SKULLGIRLS

Best 2D downloadable anime fighting beat-'em-up EVER

Publisher Autumn Games Developer Reverge Labs Price £9.99
Players 1-2 Genre Beat-'em-up



MUCH HAS BEEN made of *Skullgirls*' attempts to cater to the pasty-handed noob who'll do a fireball once every ten attempts as well as the hardcore fighting game fan. Special moves are easier to do and the tutorial is pleasingly in-depth, which recognises and cuts through the dense intricacies of the genre. Yet the real way *Skullgirls* keeps the noob playing is by being fun. The cast of eight characters (which will be expanded with DLC) is slim but they're all distinct and well animated. Despite having a tag system *Skullgirls* doesn't descend into *Marvel Vs Capcom 3* madness, feeling more 'traditional' and being easier to keep up with, without having to sacrifice personality.

88%



ESCAPE PLAN: BAKUKI'S LAIR

The 76%-rated things in life are free

Publisher SCE Developer Fun Bits Interactive Price Free Players 1 Genre Puzzle



AN EXTRA 19 puzzle rooms for *Escape Plan* is something we'd be happy to pay a quid or two for, so it's really rather brilliant that this pack has been released free of charge alongside a patch. It's what you'd expect – tricky and taxing levels involving some exacting manoeuvres and split-second timing. Oh, and a lot of deaths. It's the same game as before so it has the same plus and negative points – but some of the more fiddly levels in *Bakuki's Lair* do seem to irritate more than the original did, mainly down to some unresponsive controls. It's still good, though – and free, making the original game an even stronger purchase.

76%



HOUSE OF THE DEAD 4

Mansion of the tired

Publisher Sega Developer Sega Price £9.99 Players 1 Genre Shoot-'em-up

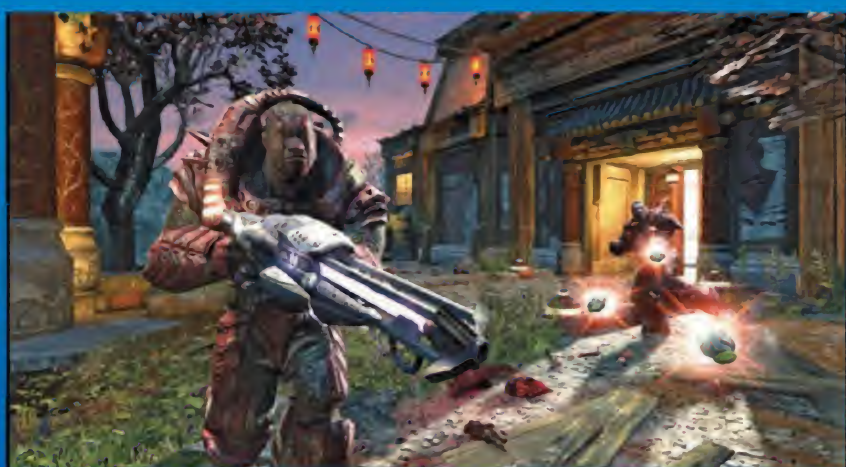


YOU WILL NOT find members of *Play* sporting finely toned bodies to make Adonis blush. Mostly because we're made of chips and have spent years toning our party physique, designed to keep us warm in the wee hours of morning. So maybe the shake-Move-controller-to-reload implemented in *House Of The Dead 4* wasn't meant for us. But it doesn't seem to have been made for anyone – it's too random to be relied upon and too tiring to be enjoyable. That aside, *House Of The Dead 4* can be played on pad anyway and is brilliant fun, the best lightgun game on PlayStation 3 besides the *Time Crisis 4* bonus with *Time Crisis: Razing Storm*.

82%

766 TROPHIES FOR £69

Your worth as a gamer can be found in your Trophy count, but hunting Trophies can be both costly and time-consuming. So here's a definitive list of the easiest Trophies you can collect without having to shell out too much...

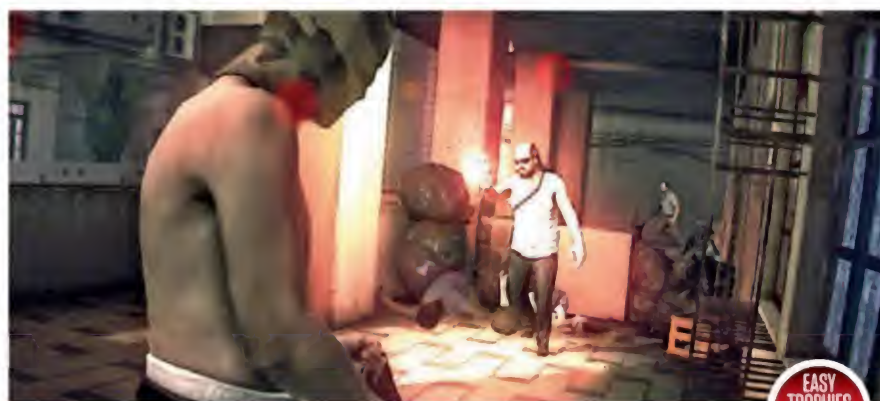


UNREAL TOURNAMENT III

£3.95 from Play.com

For a bit of classic, old-school FPS action, *Unreal Tournament III* is as good as they come – which is why it's still got something of a die-hard following on PS3. The Trophies themselves aren't too difficult, except for shonky AI making completing the game on Insane a bit of a pest. For the 'Get A Life' Trophy, consider altering the system clock to play on 50 different days. Meanwhile 'Untouchable' should be played on Heat Ray with a mutator making all weapons the Impact Hammer – survive until the Darkwalker appears then hop in and obliterate your God-like enemy.

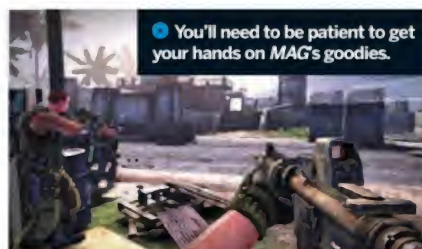
EASY
TROPHIES
44



KANE & LYNCH 2: DOG DAYS

£3.45 from Play.com

Don't play this on the hardest difficulty (normal is a breeze) and the single-player Trophies won't prove difficult at all. There are a handful of co-op based ones, so maybe you can persuade a friend to part with £3.45 to team up with you for the rest. Having an ally will help boost some of the multiplayer ones too, though the majority of those can be earned solo in Arcade mode. The community is practically dead now, however, so multiplayer might be a no-go anyway. If you do get a round, be wary of being shot and downed so you're ready to shoot back for 'Unfinished Business'.



MAG

£3.95 from Play.com

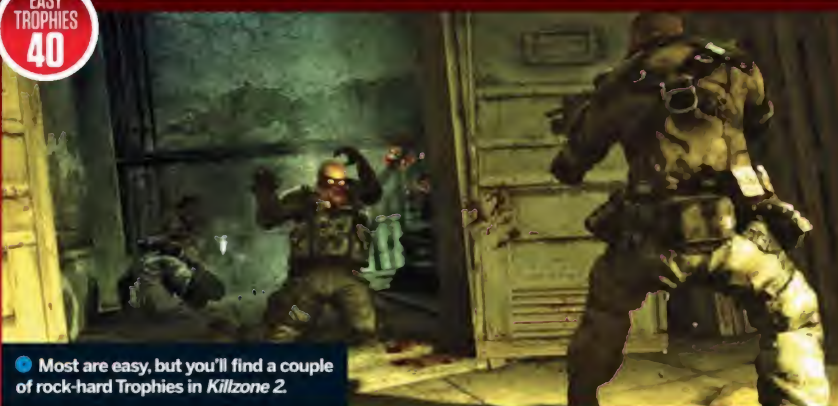
If you do pick up *MAG*, just remember the Trophies won't come quickly. There's a few difficult Trophies since you're playing online, which means there's an element of luck involved, but a lot are tied to the in-game ribbon system. Try to pick a ribbon or Trophy you want to go for and keep practising until you get it. Once you know the game a bit more it will come more easily, but you'll have to put some time into this decent online shooter before you really see the benefit, Trophy-wise. Don't say you weren't warned.

EASY
TROPHIES
45

EASY
TROPHIES
30

151 TROPHIES FOR £8

EASY
TROPHIES
40



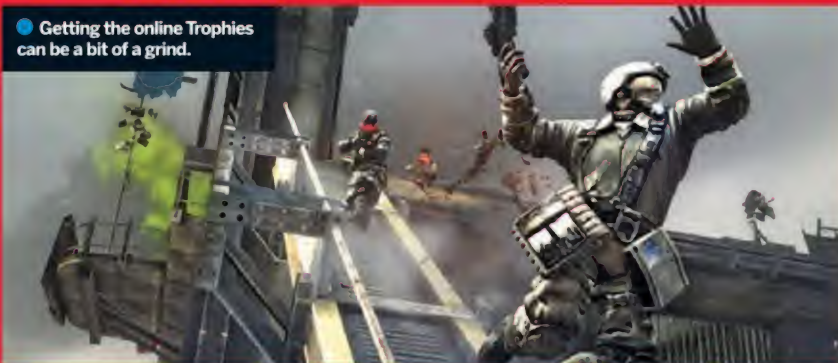
Most are easy, but you'll find a couple of rock-hard Trophies in *Killzone 2*.

KILLZONE 2

£2.98 from Play.com

There are a couple of insanely difficult Trophies for *Killzone 2* (finishing it and defeating Radek on Elite difficulty, mostly) but the rest are fairly straightforward. You'll likely need to replay sections of the game again to mop up missed opportunities, while the timed boss fights are easy if you play the game on a lower difficulty. The online Trophies aren't so much difficult as they are time-consuming, requiring you to play excessively for a week straight to rank among the highest scoring players. The ribbons might be a little hard to collect when playing alongside the die-hard community too, though they can easily be boosted in a private match with a friend.

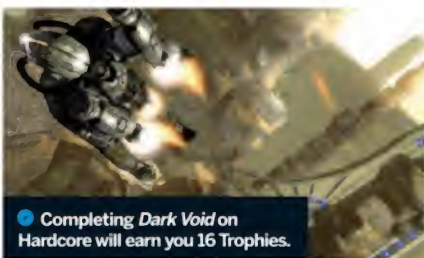
Getting the online Trophies can be a bit of a grind.



DARK VOID

£2.98 from Play.com

For three quid *Dark Void* is a pretty enjoyable third-person shooter, and it's not too difficult on vacuuming up all those shiny Trophies either. You'll earn 16 Trophies just for completing the game on Hardcore (which isn't even that hard), let alone the many others you'll collect throughout the game. Make sure you take a look through the Trophy list before playing, however, just so you can remember when to spot opportunities for certain Trophies. Be wary that 'Grease Monkey' has been known to be glitched, however, sometimes not unlocking for everyone – so keep a save ready for that last weapon upgrade.



Completing *Dark Void* on Hardcore will earn you 16 Trophies.



EASY
TROPHIES
48

FIFA 09

£1.00 from Play.com

All the online Trophies are off limits here since EA shut down the servers, but the rest of the single-player (or local co-op) Trophies are a doddle to get. Most will come through playing the game – and since there's one for playing for 50 hours, you've got plenty of time for them to pop. Any that require specific types of goals, simply use a second controller to stop the computer from messing up your shots. For the £50 million 'Huge Investment' Trophy, remember to switch the game's currency to dollars to increase the amount you've got.



EASY
TROPHIES
36



EASY
TROPHIES
27

PES 2010: PRO EVOLUTION SOCCER

£1.38 from Play.com

Another ancient (not really) football game where the Platinum Trophy is blocked off courtesy of the servers being shut down. There are fewer online Trophies here, however, and many that are here only really need working through the various modes. Try to get 'Gentleman' early on, since it requires you to really avoid tackling to lower the risk of fouls. The hardest Trophy is 'Lone Ranger', where you need to score from 35m or greater. It'll take practice, but consider switching the camera to player view and shoot with maximum power from around the halfway line – with luck you'll get it in without too many attempts.



Cut out the fouls if you want the 'Gentleman' Trophy.

MERCENARIES 2: WORLD IN FLAMES

£4.69 from Play.com

Mercenaries 2's Trophies aren't difficult at all, the problem comes in the game's widely reported and very-much-an-issue glitches. This is mostly true when playing in co-op, but there are many other situations when the game won't play ball. To counter this, simply keep a lot of saves as backups: it may mean reverting to an old save, but it's that or lose all your progress. The rest of the Trophies are a huge grind, however, so while the majority will come fairly quickly and easily, you may want to give up on the later ones (such as Billion Dollar Babies).



EASY
TROPHIES
40



LITTLEBIGPLANET

£5.08 from Play.com

This fantastic platformer has plenty of content available to you and a heap of Trophies for very little effort. 'Booty Master' might prove a little tricky since you'll need to find all those hidden bubbles, but you'll likely enjoy tracking them down anyway. The hardest ones will be the 'Create' based Trophies, since it's unlikely you'll be able to build a level the community would be interested in now. If these are the last Trophies you've got to get (the others won't be too much of an issue) then don't feel too worried about creating a 'Heart 4 Heart' level – the community might help you out.

EASY
TROPHIES
46

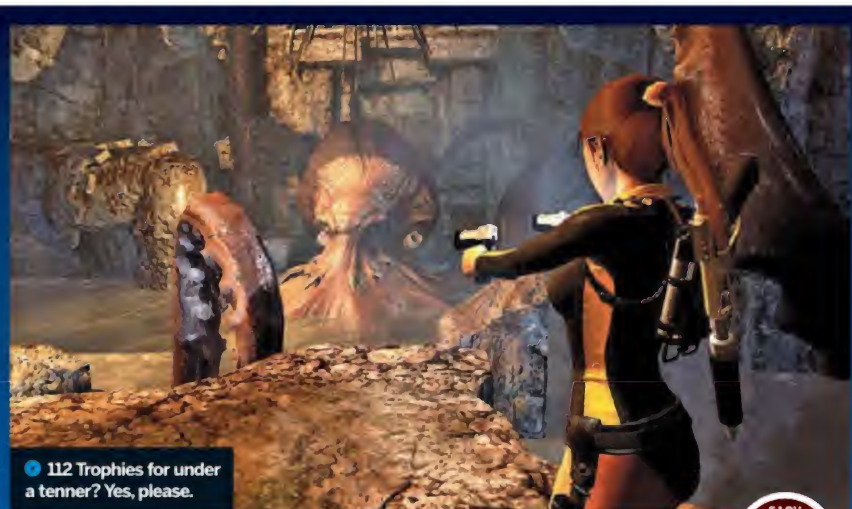
DUKE NUKEM FOREVER

£5.49 from Play.com

This game practically spits Trophies out at you, the only problem is you'll have to play through it to earn them. For that, we're sorry. However you'll easily be able to collect almost all of these Trophies, barring the Hardcore difficulty based 'Damn, I'm Good' one, without even trying. You'll need to keep an eye out for when to look for the right situation and there are a few collectable Trophies that will need persistence but there isn't much difficulty in this horde of silverware.



EASY
TROPHIES
50



112 Trophies for under a tenner? Yes, please.

TOMB RAIDER TRILOGY

£9.95 from Amazon.co.uk

While this will set you back a tenner, you'll get three games and over one hundred Trophies to gather for your collection. None of them – besides the difficulty based Trophies – are actually that difficult to get either, though you will need to keep an eye out for the collectables and area-specific Trophies. Before you start each game be sure to check the Trophy list just so you know when and where each Trophy will be required and you'll have no problem mopping up these three collections of Trophies.

EASY
TROPHIES
112



HOMEFRONT

£4.95 from Play.com

The Platinum is possible, the multiplayer is hacked and there's a lot of Trophies for completing the game on hard, but don't let that put you off, there's still plenty to get through. Besides, *Homefront* only lasts as long as an episode of *EastEnders*, so you'll have plenty of reason to go back and play on hard. Each mission has at least one bespoke Trophy for it, so have a look to know what is required of you – if you still can't do it, play through the section on easy and they'll likely pop without any effort. There's a few early multiplayer ones to grab too, but don't bother putting too much time into the mode. Seriously.

EASY
TROPHIES
37



Homefront should be no sweat for all the real Trophy whores out there.

Trophies Guide

BRINK

£2.92 from Amazon.co.uk

This is one of the few collections here where all of the Trophies are possible. The majority come through standard play, unlocking when using specific abilities or actions you'll likely do in a match anyway. Take a look at the Trophy list before playing to know what's needed of you, then play through both the Resistance and the Security campaign missions. There are a couple of tricky Trophies, such as 'That mine you found? Disarmed!' which is mostly based on luck when playing online. There are a few challenges that can be tricky too, but nothing that's a game-breaker.



EASY
TROPHIES
37

STORMRISE

£3.49 from Play.com

We're going to be honest, *Stormrise* isn't very good. But if you can put up with its awful controls, camera navigation and terrible AI path finding then you've got a whole host of easy Trophies you can collect. You'll need to keep an eye out for certain enemy types while playing, as well as specific objectives related to each mission. Of course multiplayer is dead now, though some Trophies still unlock through skirmish mode. 'Whip It Good' should be collected during a skirmish, in fact, since it's much easier to complete without worrying too much about an attack.



EASY
TROPHIES
34



UFC 2009: UNDISPUTED

£3.49 from Play.com

The majority of *UFC 2009*'s Trophies are simple enough, requiring special ways of knocking out your opponents or winning matches in a certain way. Obviously online will be the biggest hurdle, since there's some major grinds needed to reach the highest level. Chances are you won't find many people playing, so it's going to be tough to grind that far. The rest won't prove too much of a problem, though, except 'Call Me 'No Touch!'' which requires you to complete a career mode without losing a single match – if you do, simply quit to XMB and reload the game.

EASY
TROPHIES
25



With few gamers still playing *UFC 2009*, online Trophies could be tricky.

PRINCE OF PERSIA

£3.50 from Play.com

2008's *Prince Of Persia* is a neat little platformer, and well worth £3.50 – especially since the majority of Trophies won't take much effort. You'll need to read through the list to know what is expected of you, however, since some task you with races you wouldn't otherwise attempt. Remember to press **R2** regularly to speak with Elika to earn 'Good Company'. Also, towards the end of the game you'll have to carry Elika in your arms – when this happens just leave the controller for a minute or two for 'Precious Time'. Lastly, if you collect all 1,001 Light Seeds you'll get more Trophies but will likely have to play through twice for the remaining Trophies.



EASY
TROPHIES
51



EASY
TROPHIES
13

TRUTH OR LIES

£1.98 from Amazon.co.uk

You don't get many Trophies for your two quid, but what you do is the easiest collection of Trophies in any game ever. You will need a microphone admittedly, so maybe borrow someone's *SingStar* microphone before buying. While there are Trophies for playing with eight registered players, you can just as easily play by yourself. If you do it this way you can tailor your answers, too, meaning 'A Bad Bunch' and 'Dubious' will be even easier to get. With 'A Bad Bunch' make sure you answer one question truthfully and one false then leave the last two questions alone.



EASY
TROPHIES
51

FALLOUT 3

£3.99 from Play.com

For a measly four pounds you'll get one of the best RPGs of recent years, hours of content and a healthy dose of Trophies to add to your list. While you'll need to put in a minimum of 60 hours to gather up all 51 Trophies (including the Platinum), you'll enjoy every minute and won't really have to struggle. Note that at the 7th, 14th and 20th levels you'll unlock a Trophy based on your Karma. Play the game with positive Karma, ensuring you keep a save before you reach each milestone, giving you the freedom to lower your Karma again and unlock the neutral and negative Karma Trophies after hitting each level.

THE HIDDEN SECRETS

The **PlayStation Store** doesn't begin and end with Europe – there's a whole other world out there with



USA STORE

GETTING INTO THE AMERICAN STORE



SETTING UP AN account to access US content is simple: create a new login for your PS3 through the far left column on the XMB, then choose to sign up to PSN. One of the first options is to choose your country (set it to United States, of course) and from there it's straightforward – fill in the information as you see fit, as you only need a real email address. If it happens you don't have a street address, we've heard so much about this 90210 zip code it would be rude not to use it.

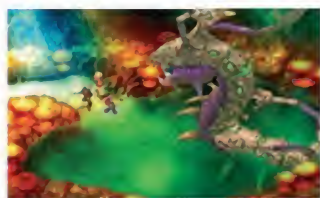
Once finished you will be able to access the delights of the US Store, though not the video content as that's still restricted when it comes to accessing it outside of North America. You will need funds to buy things, though, so head to eBay or sites like CheapXboxLiveCodes (it handles PS3, too, don't worry) and purchase US currency cards. If you shop around enough you should be able to find them at cost price, if not even cheaper, but generally speaking you *will* be paying over the odds.



CAPCOM SUPER PACK

■ Price: \$49.99

A collection of seven of Capcom's downloadable titles – *Super Street Fighter II Turbo HD Remix*, *Flock!*, *Rocketmen: Axis Of Evil*, *Age Of Booty*, *Wolf Of The Battlefield (Commando 3)*, *1942: Joint Strike* and *Super Puzzle Fighter 2 Turbo HD Remix* all for one price. When it was hit with a big discount last year it was essential, but even at full price the *Super Pack* still works out at a more-than-reasonable \$7.14 per game. True, you can get them all on the EU store, but only separately and not with this sort of discount.



CHRONO CROSS

■ Price: \$9.99

One of the best RPGs ever released on PSone and one of those numerous titles to never actually come out in Europe, *Chrono Cross* is indeed available, purchasable, downloadable and playable by everyone in the world if you have a US account. Anyone who hasn't played it and wants to involve themselves in the game vying with the *Final Fantasys* for the rank of best RPG ever released on the original PlayStation could do a lot worse. Anyone who doesn't care could also do a lot worse.



RING OF RED

■ Price: \$9.99

An overlooked gem on PS2, this blend of turn-based and real-time strategy set against the backdrop of an ongoing World War (with giant stompy robots, of course) hasn't yet seen a release on the European PS Store. It's not going to be to everyone's taste, but it is a good, solid game recommended for fans of games like *Valkyria Chronicles*. Plus for ten dollars it's not exactly breaking the bank even if you do find out you have no soul (ie don't like it).



UGLY AMERICANS: APOCALYPSEGEDDON

■ Price: \$9.99

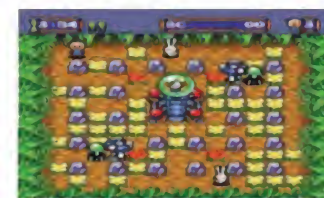
This is less a recommendation, more pointing out that it isn't always bad when we don't get content released on these shores. For while the animated show that spawned it may be half-decent, the game based on this Cartoon Network property is... well, it's pretty much terrible. A sub-standard twin-stick shooter done so much better by so many other games (*Beat Hazard Ultra*, for example), *Apocalypsegeddon* single-handedly proves that missing out isn't always a bad thing.



QORE

■ Price: Free/\$2.99

Sony's interactive magazine is a cut above anything available in the EU Store, offering behind-the-scenes features and interviews about upcoming games. It's an official production, so you're only ever going to see a wall of positivity and it *can* be a bit too American, but it's an interesting concept and there's enough exclusive footage included to make it worthwhile. Then there's the fact it appears to have gone free to download recently, making it even more worthy of a download.



BOMBERMAN '94

■ Price: \$5.99

It's a toss up between this and a few other TurboGrafx/PC Engine games available on the US Store that you can't get here (*Bonk's Adventure*, for example), but we've opted for *Bomberman*. Why? Because it's *Bomberman*, and *Bomberman* is still really good fun. Granted, *Bomberman Ultra* can be picked up in the EU, but '94 has that purity of spirit you can only get with something released back in those wonderful carefree days of the Nineties.

OF THE PS STORE

the Japanese and American shops open for your business. If you know how to get in, at least



JAPANESE STORE



ANGEL LOVE ONLINE

■ Price: Free

A reasonably popular free MMO (supported by microtransactions, natch) in which players take control of Little Angels on a campus in order to defend Eden from Lucifer. Obviously. Again, it's not one for those who know no Japanese, though you will be able to muddle through without any knowledge, and it's more of a curio – a proof of concept – than anything else. Plus it's called *Angel Love Online*, so we were never going to be able to resist that.



WEEKLY TORO STATION

■ Price: Free (¥800 monthly subscription for extras)

One of the first exclusive Japanese Store downloads of note was *Mainichi Issho*, starring the little cat-man-thing Toro. Alas, this is now dead. Not Toro, though – he's fine, as he's back in the replacement/sequel download *Weekly Toro Station*. A lot of the service revolves around news, so naturally there won't be much for you without translation skills, but there are also mini-games available to play and they no longer require you pay extra like the old version did. So there's that.

GETTING INTO THE JAPANESE STORE



IT'S DIFFICULT TO explain via words alone, but bear with us and you can gain access to the Japanese store. First set up a new log in through the far left XMB column and choose to join PSN. Set your country to Japan and fill in the other details, selecting the bottom right icon to continue (this is the case on every step). The fourth page requires a functional email address in the top box and a password to be entered twice in the next two boxes, with a secret answer in the final box. Step five is a PSN ID – it won't let you progress if it's already taken – step six you can put anything. Step seven needs a four-number combination in the top box (try 5878). Then just continue your way through until you reach the end. Every other box we haven't mentioned can have anything you want put in it, so it's hopefully not too confusing.

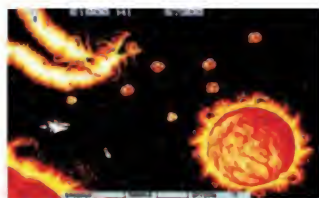
Then again, it's a lot easier if you can read Japanese. Once you're in you have access to a lot of things that will never make it out of the country.



EINHANDER

■ Price: ¥600

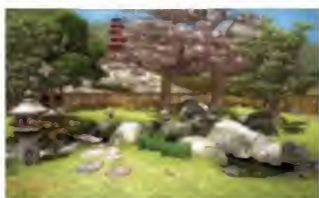
A side-scrolling shooter from back in the days when not everything came out in Europe, *Einhander* was developed and released by Square back in 1997 (1998 in the United States, but it never came out over here). Seeing as most of us never had the opportunity to play it – and it's pretty simple to get into: move, shoot, don't die – it's easy to recommend this as one of the better PSone exclusives you can only pick up through the Japanese Store.



GRADIUS 2

■ Price: ¥800

Over in Japan the PC Engine/TurboGrafx selection puts the one in the US Store to shame. It also throws more laughter in the general direction of the European Store, which has *nothing*. There's plenty to choose from and play, but we're again opting for the simplicity of a shmup here by recommending *Gradius 2*. Or the original *Gradius*, if you want. They're both great and hold up surprisingly well considering they're 20-plus years old each.



SHIKI TEI

■ Price: ¥1,600

We don't have *Viva Pinata* on PlayStation 3, but we can make do with *Shiki Tei* instead: it's a gardening simulator. Kind of. Basically, you get a garden all of your own to plant things in, move things around in and generally relax in. It's not cheap and you won't be able to understand everything in it without a working knowledge of Japanese, but *Shiki Tei* offers a nice break from the usual gaming fare of RUN RUN BANG BANG WIN WIN YEAH.



POLICENAUTS

■ Price: ¥600

The mind behind this one, never released outside of Japan, is a certain Hideo Kojima. As such it's worth picking up for the completionists, though the experience will be held back a great deal if you don't know the Japanese language. You know what Kojima's like with his words (he likes to use them). There is an unofficial English patch out there, but there's no way of getting it on this version unfortunately. Still, for the experience it's hard to ignore *Policenauts*.

TOP TEN PSN RETRO



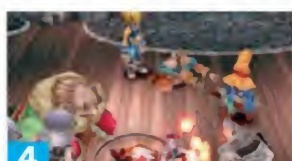
1 Metal Gear Solid



2 Resident Evil 2



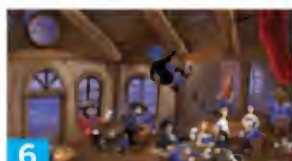
3 God Hand



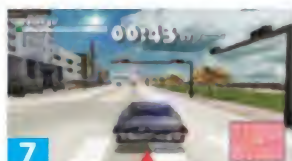
4 Final Fantasy IX



5 Streets Of Rage 2



6 The Secret Of Monkey Island



7 Driver



8 Final Fight: Double Impact



9 Sonic The Hedgehog 2



10 Crash Bandicoot

RETRO ON PSN... They're old but are they any good?



Silent Hill

• Release date August 1999 • Publisher Konami • Developer Team Silent
• Games it influenced The survival-horror genre



ON 26 FEBRUARY 1999, thousands of PlayStation owners got an unexpected surprise. It was already a monumental date:

Metal Gear Solid was released that day and expectation was at meltdown levels. After waiting five excruciating months since the North American release, the game was finally out in Europe. Many gamers, us included, ran to the shops, bought the game, ran home, ripped open the case and let out a very MGS '!' when they saw what was inside.

'Huh? What's this? *Silent... Hill?*'

There, alongside the world's most anticipated game, was a demo for a dour-looking survival-horror title. As unexpected as it was nice, but whatever, Konami. In went MGS.

Two days later, when MGS was done and we felt like all was right in the world, the demo got played. Soon, all wasn't right in the world. What the balls was this horror?

Skinless babies, omnipresent fog, the nameless dread lurking around every corner. It was a short demo, but it was enough to get across that while Konami was entering the survival-horror genre owned by Capcom, it wasn't playing by the same rules.

If *Resident Evil* was a George Romero movie – zombies, gore, experiments, terrible dialogue – then *Silent Hill* was a psychological horror: fog, missing children, conspiracy, sickly unease. The whole thing was covered with so much grime it made you feel dirty just looking at it. It was a carefully plotted exercise in giving you The Fear, right down to the sound effects when you opened the pause menu. Yeah, they even made that scary.

The full game, released in August of the same year, confirmed our suspicions that *Silent Hill* was as far away from *Resi* as you could get. Lazy comparisons were drawn in the press, but developer Team Silent (original stuff there guys) had

created something more terrifying than any Licker. One of the main reasons for this was because you were so helpless. Main character Harry Mason, looking for his lost daughter after a car crash, was intentionally designed to be an everyman. Not an all-action hero, not a muscle-bound gym bunny, just a man. In a coat.

If that wasn't enough, your enemies were grotesque. The game would include even more supernatural elements as it progressed – and considering this is a game that started with knife-wielding, skinless babies that's some achievement – but the real antagonist, and star of the show was *Silent Hill* itself. A picturesque Midwestern town gone to absolute ruin, its spookiness came down to the fact that, until the end, you could never quite figure out who or what was behind it all.

Misleading information, shadowy characters, double-crossing allies, moral choices, and five endings all led to confusion and fear. You didn't want to go on, but had to find out the answer to the mystery. It was adult in a way that a lot of games still aren't, something that would be expanded upon masterfully by its sequel.

It had its fair share of niggles, with a major fault being that the combat was rubbish (a fault that continues to this day in the series). These aside, however, *Silent Hill* was a great start to a series that would go on to even better things, and a welcome alternative to T-Viruses and shade-wearing bad guys.



WHAT WE SAID: Issue 51 • 84%
"Scary as hell, but rough around the edges"

NEVER COMING TO PSN #6



Chulip

- Release date October 2002
- Developer Punchline

WE SAY 'NEVER' coming to PSN' but '0.0001% chance of coming to PSN' would be more accurate, as someone with too much money and a bizarre sense of humour has decided to bring *Chulip* to North America. And it's, you know, a game about kissing strangers. Because a love letter to the girl next door was stolen and torn up. So Chulip has to kiss people. Because... no. We don't understand.

Chulip had to wait for the right time to kiss strangers to 'strengthen your heart', with some emerging from underground. Yes, people popped up from underground and you have to kiss them before they disappear. It's also the only game we know where you can find and sell poo.

Worryingly, creator Yoshiro Kimura has threatened a sequel set in The Bronx. The world is not ready. Though if Kimura is thinking of kissing strangers in The Bronx for the sake of research, we'd argue he's not ready either.

WE COULD HAVE DONE WITHOUT

Chronicles Of The Sword



TRUE STORY: ONE of our writers, in his younger days, knocked on a friend's door and asked to borrow a

PlayStation game. Any would do. The friend responded by running up the stairs of his house and throwing a copy of *Chronicles Of The Sword* out of the window, before shutting it and refusing to come downstairs. After a few minutes playing the game, the writer in question knew why. *Chronicles Of The Sword* is dreadful.

You see, *Chronicles* was released in the early days of PlayStation when developers and the public were still in love with the idea of both a) point-and-click games and B) pre-rendered graphics, whether the system could handle it or not. Throw them together and you get *Chronicles*: a game that was as slow moving as it is dull, filled with terrible dialogue and confusing gameplay. No one we know who played it got beyond the first disc and anyone that did is a fool.

Not us, though. Mr **Play** tried to return it to the person who had lent it to us. They never responded.



PS2 CLASSICS REVIEW - GUNGRAVE: OVERDOSE

The ugly Bayonetta

IT WAS DEVIL *May Cry* without the daring, *Vanquish* without the volition, *Bayonetta* without the budget. Yet *Gungrave: Overdose* could never be accused of not being as imaginative as its genre stalemates nor shying away from nut-shrivelling difficulty.

Based on the anime of the same name, *Gungrave: Overdose* was about a gunslinger who attacked using pistols and the coffin hanging from his back. Enemies were laid out in a way

that entire levels could be complete in a single combo. It's a pig to look at and was never particularly sexy or stylish to begin with, but pursuit of that single combo run ensures *Gungrave: Overdose* combined with its rough and ready look does give it a dogged grindhouse appeal few games today have. It's worth its £3.99 price if you enjoyed those games mentioned in the intro or fancy something that isn't afraid of challenging you.



RETRO GAMES WE SAID WE WANT TO PLAY AGAIN BUT PROBABLY WON'T



International Track & Field

A FRIEND OF **Play** had a special trick for winning the 100 metres on this, which was: balance pad on thigh. Hammer **Ⓢ** with right index finger, hover over **Ⓢ** with left and let the pad's momentum carry it onto your left finger. This would see you run the race in about eight seconds. We could never beat him, and now we hate this game.



Iznogoud

A PLATFORMER BASED on a French cartoon, this game must have had headline writers rubbing their hands with glee. Ha ha ha, it's called *Iznogoud*! IS NO GOOD! And you know what, it wasn't. So at least they got that right.



Burnout 2

DEDICATED MORE TO the art of good technical driving than its smash-happy successor, *Burnout 2* was an absolute joy: split-times, great stages, massive crashes if you put a foot wrong. Will we play it again? Nah. Nostalgia ain't what it used to be, after all.



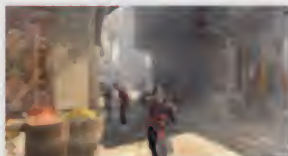
Gran Turismo 2

WHEN WE THINK about *GT2* we start to get really excited about how excited we were back in the day and think we'll give it another go. Then reality dawns and we realise that it would never end well, and with a tear in our eye we put it back on the shelf. Sob.

PLAY# PlayList

If you want to know what a game scored then these pages are for you

TEAM PICKS 'GOOD' GAMES WE DIDN'T CLICK WITH



top five RYAN KING

- 1 Assassin's Creed: Revelations
- 2 FIFA 12
- 3 Street Fighter IV
- 4 Resistance 2
- 5 Battlefield: Bad Company 2



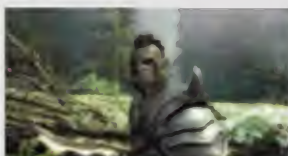
top five IAN DRANSFIELD

- 1 Modern Warfare 3
- 2 Crysis 2
- 3 Red Dead Redemption
- 4 Assassin's Creed: Brotherhood
- 5 Dante's Inferno



top five STEVE BURNS

- 1 Uncharted 3
- 2 Gran Turismo 5
- 3 Killzone
- 4 Final Fantasy series
- 5 Skyrim



top five DAN PEEL

- 1 Skyrim
- 2 Modern Warfare 3
- 3 Final Fantasy series
- 4 BioShock 2
- 5 God Of War III

PS3 LISTING



game	issue	score
3D Collection	195	75%
3D Dot Game Heroes	192	87%
50 Cent: Blood On The Sand	177	70%
Ace Combat: Assault Horizon	211	78%
Afro Samurai	177	61%
Agarest: Generations Of War	187	78%
Agarest: Generations Of War Zero	209	52%
Air Conflicts: Secret Wars	208	58%
Alice: Madness Returns	207	57%
Aliens Vs Predator	189	79%
Alone In The Dark	173	70%
Alpha Protocol	193	83%
Ape Escape	208	55%
Arcana Heart 3	207	79%
Armored Core For Answer	173	65%
Armored Core 4	153	67%
Armored Core V	217	60%
Army Of Two	164	80%
Army Of Two: The 40th Day	188	65%
Ar Tonelico Qoga: Knell Of Ar Ciel	203	27%
Ashes Cricket 2009	183	30%
Assassin's Creed	161	58%
Assassin's Creed II	186	89%
Assassin's Creed: Brotherhood	199	91%
More than enough additions to take the Assassin's Creed formula into modern classic territory.		
Assassin's Creed Revelations	212	75%
Asura's Wrath	216	67%
Atelier Rorona: The Alchemist Of Arland	198	77%
Backbreaker	193	70%
Band Hero	187	68%
Batman: Arkham Asylum	183	85%
Batman: Arkham City	211	94%
Rocksteady's sequel to the excellent Arkham Asylum is a serious contender for game of the year.		
Battle Fantasia	176	67%
Battlefield: Bad Company	168	78%
Battlefield: Bad Company 2	190	93%
Single-player is fairly impressive but take it online and it's bordering on genius. This is quite possibly the best shooter on PS3 today.		
Battlefield 3	212	88%
Bayonetta*	187	93%
Beijing 2008	168	54%
Beowulf	161	61%
Binary Domain	216	70%
Bionic Commando	179	82%
BioShock	172	93%
BioShock 2	189	88%
Birds Of Steel	217	55%
BlackSite	163	43%
Bladestorm: The Hundred Years' War	160	58%
BlazBlue: Calamity Trigger	190	85%
BlazBlue: Continuum Shift	198	94%
Blazing Angels	151	54%
Bleach: Soul Resurrección	209	63%
Blitz: The League II	172	67%
Blur	193	86%
Bodycount	210	54%
Borderlands	185	80%
Brink	206	67%
Brothers In Arms: Hell's Highway	171	75%
Brütal Legend	185	79%
Bulletstorm	203	86%
Burnout Paradise	162	74%
Buzz!: Quiz TV	168	82%
Buzz! Quiz World	185	70%
Call Of Duty 3	151	77%

game	issue	score
Call Of Duty: World At War	173	68%
Call Of Duty 4: Modern Warfare	160	88%
Call Of Duty: Modern Warfare 2	186	94%
Call Of Duty: Modern Warfare 3	212	88%
Call Of Duty: Black Ops	199	94%
Treyarch's first genuinely brilliant entry to the series and a standard-bearer for fast-paced online shooters.		
Call Of Juarez: Bound In Blood	181	85%
Call Of Juarez: The Cartel	208	30%
Captain America: Super Soldier	208	70%
Castlevania: Lords Of Shadow	197	85%
Carnival Island	213	53%
Cars 2	208	68%
Catherine	215	61%
Champion Jockey	210	50%
Chronicles Of Riddick: Assault On Dark Athena	178	87%
Child Of Eden	211	80%
Civilization Revolution	168	90%
Clash Of The Titans	193	65%
Clive Barker's Jericho	159	84%
Colin McRae: DiRT	158	91%
Colin McRae: DiRT 2	184	87%
Command & Conquer: Red Alert 3	178	65%
Conan	160	71%
Condemned 2	165	78%
Conflict: Denied Ops	164	50%
Create	199	71%
Cross Edge	182	59%
Crysis 2	204	72%
Damnation	181	38%
Dance Dance Revolution	201	52%
Dante's Inferno	189	80%
Dark Sector	165	62%
Dark Souls	211	90%
Sequel to one of the hardest games in recent times, Dark Souls is another superb release from developer From Software.		
Dark Void	188	81%
Darksiders	188	83%
DC Universe Online	202	80%
de Blob 2	203	65%
Dead Island	210	79%
Dead Rising 2	197	78%
Dead Rising 2: Off The Record	211	61%
Dead Space	172	87%
Dead Space 2	201	92%
The point where the Dead Space series stepped up and became something to be genuinely excited about.		
Dead To Rights: Retribution	192	68%
Def Jam: Icon	151	79%
Def Jam Rapstar	199	72%
Demon's Souls	193	92%
Destroy All Humans!: Path Of The Furon	178	29%
Deus Ex: Human Revolution	209	91%
Wornies: unfounded. Fun: lots of it. True Deus Ex experience: confirmed. Boss battles: bloody awful.		
Devil May Cry 4	163	89%
Devil May Cry HD Collection	217	80%
DiRT 3	206	85%
Disgaea 3: Absence Of Justice	175	81%
DJ Hero	186	91%
It's just like playing Guitar Hero for the first time all over again, although DJ Hero is slightly more expensive.		
DJ Hero 2	198	88%
Dragon Age: Origins	186	82%
Dragon Age II	203	86%
Dragon Ball: Raging Blast	186	40%
Dragon Ball Z: Burst Limit	168	61%
Driver: San Francisco	209	68%
Duke Nukem Forever	207	33%
Dungeon Siege III	206	80%
Dynasty Warriors: Gundam	160	40%
Dynasty Warriors: Gundam 2	176	43%
Dynasty Warriors: Gundam 3	208	56%

game	issue	score
Dynasty Warriors: Strikeforce	189	37%
Dynasty Warriors 6	164	30%
Dynasty Warriors 6: Empires	181	44%
Dynasty Warriors 7	204	32%
EA Sports Active 2	200	81%
EA Sports Grand Slam Tennis	215	75%
EA Sports MMA	198	89%
Eat Lead	178	38%
EDF: Insect Armageddon	208	64%
El Shaddai: Ascension Of The Metatron	208	77%
Enchanted Arms	152	69%
Enemy Territory: Quake Wars	168	60%
Enslaved: Odyssey To The West	197	83%
Eternal Sonata	176	87%
Everybody's Golf 5*	158	88%
Everybody's Golf: World Tour	165	91%
Eye Of Judgment	159	65%
EyePet	185	83%
EyePet: Move	197	84%
F1 2010	197	86%
F1 2011	211	71%
FaceBreaker	170	55%
Fairytale Fights	186	51%
Fallout 3	173	97%
Fallout 3 lives up to its promise and then some. It's a damning portrayal of the consequences of war, and a compelling RPG experience.		
Fallout: New Vegas	198	88%
Fantastic Four: Rise Of The Silver Surfer	155	39%
Far Cry 2	172	74%
F.E.A.R.	151	81%
F.E.A.R. 2: Project Origin	176	87%
F.E.A.R. 3	208	60%
FIFA 08	159	84%
FIFA 09	171	87%
FIFA 10	184	90%
FIFA 11	197	91%
FIFA 12	210	86%
FIFA Street (2012)	217	74%
FIFA Street 3	163	66%
FIFA World Cup 2010	192	70%
Fight Night Champion	203	88%
Fight Night Round 3	151	87%
Fight Night Round 4	181	84%
Final Fantasy XIII	190	85%
Final Fantasy XIII-2	214	80%
Fist Of The North Star: Ken's Rage	198	51%
Folklore	158	66%
Formula One Championship Edition	151	72%
Fracture	171	72%
Front Mission Evolved	198	52%
Fuel	180	49%
Full Auto 2: Battlelines	151	69%
G-Force	183	59%
Genji: Days Of The Blade	151	38%
Ghost Recon Advanced Warfighter 2	157	83%
Ghostbusters: The Videogame	180	80%
GI Joe	183	22%
God Of War Collection*	188	93%
Two of the greatest PS2 action games of all time come together at a bargain price. Essential purchase.		
God Of War Collection: Volume II	210	70%
God Of War III	190	88%
GoldenEye 007: Reloaded	213	63%
Gran Turismo 5	200	85%
Gran Turismo 5 Prologue	165	75%
Grand Theft Auto IV	166	98%
Green Day: Rock Band	194	77%
GTA: Episodes From Liberty City	191	94%
Guitar Hero III	160	90%
Guitar Hero III is another great rhythm-action beast, sure to delight fans and newcomers alike. So, grab a guitar and rock out!		
Guitar Hero 5	184	81%
Guitar Hero: Aerosmith	168	63%
Guitar Hero Greatest Hits	182	76%
Guitar Hero Metallica	179	88%

This month's new entries

The newest games, freshly squeezed among all your old favourites

Silent Hill: Downpour PS3	81%	FIFA Street PS3	74%	Ninja Gaiden Sigma Plus PSV	72%
Ridge Racer Unbounded PS3	67%	Naruto Shippuden: Ultimate Ninja Storm Generations PS3	53%	A-Men PSV	70%
Silent Hill HD Collection PS3	76%	JASF PS3	30%	Rayman 3 HD PSN	77%
RE: Operation Raccoon City PS3	33%	Mud PS3	50%	Worms: Ultimate Mayhem PSN	80%
Devil May Cry HD Collection PS3	80%	Warriors Orochi 3 PS3	59%	I Am Alive PSN	64%
Street Fighter X Tekken PS3	83%	Birds Of Steel PS3	55%	Shoot Many Robots PSN	81%
Armored Core V PS3	60%	MotorStorm RC PSV	81%		
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 13 PS3	70%	Army Corps Of Hell PSV	64%		
Ninja Gaiden 3 PS3	63%				

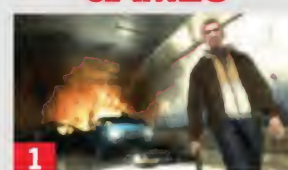
game	issue	score
Guitar Hero: Van Halen	189	65%
Guitar Hero: Warriors Of Rock	197	71%
Guitar Hero World Tour	173	95%
Harry Potter And The Deathly Hallows: Part 1	200	21%
Harry Potter And The Deathly Hallows: Part 2	208	37%
Harry Potter And The Half-Blood Prince	182	60%
Harry Potter: The Order Of The Phoenix	155	32%
Haze	167	64%
Heavenly Sword	157	71%
Heavy Rain	189	94%
Heavy Rain: Move Edition	198	70%
Heroes Over Europe	184	48%
Homefront	203	69%
Hunted: The Demon's Forge	207	59%
Hyperdimension Neptunia	202	21%
Ice Age 3: Dawn Of The Dinosaurs	182	47%
ico & Shadow Of The Colossus Classics HD	210	94%
Largely ignored when they were first released, gamers can now enjoy these wonderful games in brilliant HD.		
IL-2 Sturmovik: Birds Of Prey	183	72%
inFamous	180	81%
inFamous 2	207	83%
International Cricket 2010	194	61%
Iron Man	166	58%
Iron Man 2	193	50%
Jak And Daxter: The Lost Frontier	187	59%
James Bond 007: Blood Stone	199	63%
James Cameron's Avatar: The Game	187	64%
JASF: Jane's Advanced Strike Fighters	217	30%
John Daly's ProStroke Golf	197	70%
Juiced 2: Hot Import Nights	159	78%
Just Cause 2	190	87%
Kane & Lynch: Dead Men	160	73%
Kane & Lynch 2: Dog Days	196	71%
Katamari Forever	184	88%
Killzone 2	176	93%
Killzone 3	202	80%
Kingdoms Of Amalur: Reckoning	215	70%
Knights Contract	202	53%
Kung Fu Panda 2	207	20%
Kung Fu Rider	196	65%
Lair	158	52%
L.A. Noire	206	91%
Not perfect but Rockstar's new IP introduces pioneering facial-capture technology and interesting gameplay.		
Last Rebellion	191	42%
Legend Of Spyro: Dawn Of The Dragon	174	54%
Legendary	173	62%
Lego Batman	173	65%
Lego Harry Potter: Years 1-4	194	79%
Lego Harry Potter: Years 5-7	213	67%
Lego Indiana Jones: The Original Adventures	167	73%
Lego Indiana Jones 2:		
The Adventure Continues	187	71%
Lego Pirates Of The Caribbean	206	76%
Lego Rock Band	187	75%
Lego Star Wars: The Complete Saga	160	76%
Lego Star Wars III: The Clone Wars	204	79%
Leisure Suit Larry: Box Office Bust	180	24%
LittleBigPlanet	172	94%
LittleBigPlanet 2	201	96%
An amazing game and something to get involved with even if you can't create your own stuff.		
Lord Of The Rings: Aragorn's Quest	199	60%
Lost Planet 2	192	75%
Lost Planet: Extreme Condition	163	69%
Lost: The Video Game	164	38%
LOTR: Conquest	175	52%
Madden NFL 07	151	82%
Madden NFL 08	157	82%
Madden NFL 09	170	83%
Madden NFL 10	184	82%
Madden NFL 11	196	84%
Madden NFL 12	209	85%
Mafia II	196	81%

game	issue	score
MAG	189	68%
Majin And The Forsaken Kingdom	199	72%
Marvel Vs Capcom 3	202	88%
Marvel Ultimate Alliance	151	64%
Marvel Ultimate Alliance 2	185	57%
Mass Effect 2	201	97%
Mass Effect 3	216	93%
Despite having arguably one of the worst endings in videogame history, this is still a must for any serious videogame collection.		
Medal Of Honor	198	86%
Medal Of Honor Airborne	161	85%
Medieval Moves	213	47%
Mercenaries 2: World In Flames	171	78%
Metal Gear Solid 4	167	92%
Not the final Metal Gear Solid game after all then. Still brilliant though, and still largely incomprehensible.		
Metal Gear Solid HD Collection	214	91%
Mobile Suit Gundam: Crossfire	151	37%
Michael Jackson: The Experience	205	58%
Midnight Club: Los Angeles	173	84%
Mindjack	202	38%
Mini Ninjas	184	80%
Mirror's Edge	173	71%
ModNation Racers	192	90%
The best kart racer by far on the PlayStation 3, but combined with incredible levels of creativity. If you love LBP you'll love this, too.		
Monster Madness	170	78%
Mortal Kombat	205	81%
Mortal Kombat vs DC Universe	173	68%
MotoGP 08	172	65%
MotoGP 09/10	190	77%
Moto GP 10/11	204	64%
MotorStorm	151	92%
MotorStorm: Apocalypse	203	76%
MotorStorm: Pacific Rift	172	93%
Mud: FIM Motocross Championship	217	50%
MX Vs ATV: Alive	206	42%
MX Vs ATV Reflex	189	68%
MX Vs ATV Untamed	164	58%
nail'd	201	61%
Naruto: Ultimate Ninja Storm	174	59%
Naruto Shippuden: Ultimate Ninja Storm Generations	217	53%
NASCAR 08	157	38%
Naughty Bear	195	64%
NBA 07	153	33%
NBA 2K7	151	76%
NBA 2K8	172	71%
NBA 2K10	186	79%
NBA 2K11	199	82%
NBA 2K12	211	88%
NBA Jam	200	68%
NBA Live 08	158	59%
NBA Live 09	170	81%
NBA Street: Homecourt	151	68%
Need For Speed Carbon	151	76%
Need For Speed: Hot Pursuit	199	91%
Hot Pursuit is one of the best arcade racers of all time - pure, unadulterated bliss in game form.		
Need For Speed ProStreet	161	86%
Need For Speed Shift	184	81%
Need For Speed: The Run	213	63%
Need For Speed Undercover	173	75%
NeverDead	215	39%
Nier	192	54%
NHL 2K7	151	80%
NHL 2K9	172	67%
NHL 2K10	186	70%
NHL 09	170	88%
NHL 10	184	85%
NHL 11	198	89%
NHL 12	210	78%
Ninja Gaiden Sigma	154	88%
Ninja Gaiden Sigma 2	184	82%

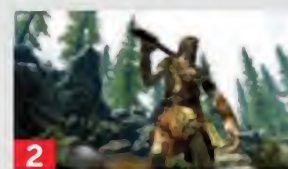
game	issue	score
Ninja Gaiden 3	217	63%
No More Heroes: Heroes' Paradise	206	89%
Operation Flashpoint: Dragon Rising	185	78%
Operation Flashpoint: Red River	205	75%
Overlord: Raising Hell	167	65%
Overlord II	181	68%
Pain	183	69%
PES 2008	159	70%
PES 2009	172	80%
PES 2010	185	72%
PES 2011	197	73%
PES 2012	210	74%
Phineas & Ferb: Across The 2nd Dimension	211	66%
PixelJunk Racers	160	74%
PlayStation Move Heroes	204	54%
POTC: At World's End	154	48%
Portal 2	205	95%
Another exceptional realisation from Valve, gamers are going to be talking about Portal 2 for a long time to come.		
Prince Of Persia	174	83%
Prince Of Persia: The Forgotten Sands	193	68%
Prince Of Persia Trilogy	200	88%
Prison Break: The Conspiracy	191	40%
Prototype	181	76%
Puma After Hours Athletes	214	58%
Pure	171	80%
Pure Football	194	69%
Quantum Of Solace	175	57%
Quantum Theory	197	29%
Race Driver: GRID	167	85%
Racket Sports	198	37%
Rage	211	60%
Rainbow Six Vegas	155	88%
Rainbow Six Vegas 2	164	78%
Rango	203	54%
Ratchet & Clank: A Crack In Time	186	82%
Ratchet & Clank: All 4 One	211	68%
Ratchet & Clank: Tools Of Destruction	160	72%
Rayman Origins	212	80%
Red Dead Redemption	193	92%
Relocates the familiar GTA formula to a superbly realised new setting and, in many ways, is unlike anything else as a result.		
Red Dead Redemption: Undead Nightmare	199	87%
Red Faction: Armageddon	207	62%
Red Faction: Guerrilla	180	80%
Resident Evil: Operation Raccoon City	217	33%
Resident Evil 5	177	86%
Resident Evil 5: Gold Edition	190	86%
Resistance: Fall Of Man	151	83%
Resistance 2	173	90%
With its impressive set pieces and glorious multiplayer mode, Resistance 2 is one of the best FPSs on the PS3.		
Resistance 3	210	88%
Resonance Of Fate	191	79%
Ridge Racer 7	151	75%
Ridge Racer Unbounded	217	67%
Rise Of The Argonauts	176	58%
Rock Band	169	94%
Rock Band 2	179	96%
With the incredible tracklist, tweaked engine, and new modes, this is easily the best rhythm-action game currently available.		
Rock Band 3	199	84%
Rogue Warrior	188	09%
Rugby World Cup 2011	209	49%
R.U.S.E.	197	82%
Sacred 2: Fallen Angel	180	76%
Saints Row 2	172	79%
Saints Row: The Third	211	88%
Saint Seiya: Sanctuary Battle	216	52%
Saw	186	52%
Saw II: Flesh & Blood	198	36%
Sega Mega Drive Ultimate Collection	177	85%
SBK 08	172	55%
SBK 2011	206	70%

*denotes import review

TOP TEN SANDBOX GAMES



1 Grand Theft Auto IV



2 The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim



3 Saints Row: The Third



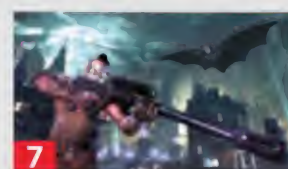
4 LittleBigPlanet 2



5 Fallout 3



6 Just Cause 2



7 Batman: Arkham City



8 Yakuza 4



9 Fallout: New Vegas



10 Red Dead Redemption

PS3 TOP FIVES



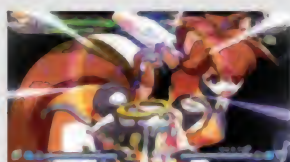
FPS

- 1 Battlefield 3
- 2 Modern Warfare 3
- 3 Deus Ex: Human Revolution
- 4 Portal 2
- 5 Resistance 3



RACING

- 1 Gran Turismo 5
- 2 WipEout 2048
- 3 Need For Speed: Hot Pursuit
- 4 MotorStorm RC
- 5 DiRT 3



PS VITA

- 1 WipEout 2048
- 2 Uncharted: Golden Abyss
- 3 Everybody's Golf
- 4 FIFA Football
- 5 BlazBlue: Continuum Shift Extend



ADVENTURE

- 1 Mass Effect 3
- 2 The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim
- 3 Uncharted 3: Drake's Deception
- 4 Saints Row: The Third
- 5 Dark Souls



FIGHTING

- 1 Street Fighter III
- 2 BlazBlue: Continuum Shift Extend
- 3 Tekken 6
- 4 Street Fighter X Tekken
- 5 Soul Calibur V

game issue score

SBK X: Superbike World Championship	193	67%
Sega Rally	158	92%
Simply the best rally game on the PS3. Unless simulation is your bag then you'll want to go for Colin McRae. Not much in it, really.		
Sengoku Basara: Samurai Heroes	198	76%
Shadows Of The Damned	207	79%
Shaun White Skateboarding	198	70%
Shaun White Snowboarding	173	72%
Shellshock 2: Blood Trails	177	32%
Shift 2: Unleashed	204	66%
Silent Hill: Downpour	217	81%
Silent Hill HD Collection	217	76%
Silent Hill: Homecoming	174	64%
Simpsons Game	160	82%
SingStar	159	80%
SingStar Guitar	199	70%
SingStar Pop Edition	179	81%
Singularity	195	80%
Skate	159	86%
Skate 2	175	82%
Skate 3	192	86%
Sniper: Ghost Warrior	206	45%
SOCOM: Special Forces	205	63%
Sonic & Sega All-Stars Racing	190	78%
Sonic Generations	212	70%
Sonic The Hedgehog	151	52%
Sonic Unleashed	175	48%
SoulCalibur IV	169	94%
SoulCalibur V	214	80%
Spider-Man 3	155	33%
Spider-Man: Edge Of Time	212	38%
Spider-Man: Shattered Dimensions	197	69%
Spider-Man: Web Of Shadows	173	55%
Splatterhouse	200	58%
Splinter Cell Double Agent	153	79%
Split/Second: Velocity	192	90%
Just beating Blur to the chequered flag, Split/Second is a wonderfully intense racing game in the Burnout mould		
Sports Champions	196	83%
SSX	216	45%
Star Ocean: The Last Hope International	190	63%
Star Wars: The Force Unleashed	171	65%
Star Wars: The Force Unleashed II	199	61%
Start The Party!	196	72%
Stormrise	178	51%
Stranglehold	159	65%
Street Fighter IV	176	95%
Street Fighter X Tekken	217	83%
Super Street Fighter IV: Arcade Edition	207	88%
Stuntman: Ignition	157	82%
SuperCar Challenge	183	66%
Superstars V8: Next Challenge	190	55%
Superstars V8 Racing	181	63%
Super Street Fighter IV	191	90%
The fact that you're buying a lot of stuff you've probably bought already is the only drawback to what is the best fighter ever made		
Supremacy MMA	211	40%
Syndicate	216	78%
Tekken 6	184	94%
There are flaws that hurt the experience, but nothing, nothing, stops Tekken 6 from being an intense, tactical and brilliant fighting game.		
Tekken Hybrid	213	79%
Test Drive Unlimited 2	203	62%
The Adventures Of Tintin	212	58%
The Beatles: Rock Band	184	96%
The Bourne Conspiracy	168	72%
The Club	163	80%
The Cursed Crusade	211	40%
The Darkness	154	91%
The Darkness II	215	76%
The Elder Scrolls IV: Oblivion	152	91%
The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim	212	93%
WARNING: The latest addition to Bethesda's superb franchise will seriously damage your social life		
The Fight	199	42%
The Godfather	151	37%
The Godfather II	178	38%
The Golden Compass	162	32%
The House Of The Dead: Overkill	212	75%
The Incredible Hulk	168	52%
The Jak And Daxter Trilogy	216	82%
The King Of Fighters XII	182	82%

game issue score

The King Of Fighters XIII	213	76%
The Lord Of The Rings: War In The North	213	42%
The Orange Box	161	93%
The Saboteur	187	67%
The Shoot	199	76%
The Sims 3	199	87%
The Sims 3: Pets	212	70%
The Sly Collection	200	84%
Thor: God Of Thunder	206	38%
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 07	151	88%
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 08	158	73%
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 09	171	86%
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 10	181	69%
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 11	194	60%
Tiger Woods PGA 12: The Masters	204	65%
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 13	217	70%
Time Crisis 4	166	69%
Time Crisis: Razing Storm	199	58%
TimeShift	162	72%
TNA Impact!	171	71%
Tom Clancy's EndWar	173	80%
Tom Clancy's H.A.W.X.	177	75%
Tom Clancy's H.A.W.X. 2	196	69%
Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell Classics Trilogy HD	210	78%
Tomb Raider Trilogy	204	86%
Tomb Raider: Underworld	173	83%
Tony Hawk's Project 8	151	85%
Tony Hawk's Proving Ground	160	72%
Tony Hawk: Ride	188	52%
Top Spin 3	168	71%
Top Spin 4	203	60%
Tornado Outbreak	186	56%
Toy Story 3	195	82%
Transformers: Dark Of The Moon	208	64%
Transformers: Revenge Of The Fallen	182	41%
Transformers: The Game	156	34%
Transformers: War For Cybertron	194	80%
Trinity: Souls Of Zill O'll	202	56%
Trinity Universe	194	61%
Tron Evolution	200	17%
Turning Point: Fall Of Liberty	165	40%
Turok	163	46%
TV Superstars	199	53%
Twisted Metal	216	68%
Two Worlds II	203	64%
UEFA EURO 2008	165	62%
UFC Undisputed 2009	180	90%
Undisputed is gorgeous to look at, it's incredibly deep, and it's one of the most addictive fighters we've played in ages		
UFC Undisputed 2010	193	88%
UFC Undisputed 3	215	82%
Ultimate Marvel Vs Capcom 3	212	78%
Uncharted: Drake's Fortune	161	87%
Uncharted 2: Among Thieves	185	96%
Uncharted 3: Drake's Deception	212	90%
Fans of the series won't be disappointed as Drake returns with some exceptional set pieces and superb action		
Unreal Tournament III	162	88%
Untold Legends: Dark Kingdom	151	54%
Valkyria Chronicles	173	82%
Vancouver 2010	189	76%
Vanquish	197	93%
A brilliant surprise from the developer of Bayonetta and easily one of the best games we've played in 2010.		
Viking: Battle For Asgard	165	74%
Virtua Fighter 5	151	83%
Virtua Tennis 2009	180	80%
Virtua Tennis 3	150	91%
Virtua Tennis 4	205	79%
Wanted: Weapons Of Fate	179	63%
Warhammer 40,000: Space Marine	210	51%
Warhawk	157	84%
Warriors: Legends Of Troy	202	14%
Warriors Orochi 3	217	59%
Watchmen: The End Is Nigh	183	55%
Way Of The Samurai 3	190	16%
Wet	184	41%
Wheelman	178	72%
Where The Wild Things Are	188	56%
White Knight Chronicles	190	55%
White Knight Chronicles II	207	49%
Wolfenstein	183	72%
World Snooker Championship 2007	151	56%
WRC: FIA World Rally Championship	197	76%






game issue score

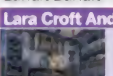




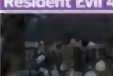
WRC 2: FIA World Rally Championship	211	63%
WSC REAL 09: World Snooker Championship	177	67%
WSC Real 11	204	69%
WWE All Stars	204	82%
WWE Legends Of Wrestlemania	178	80%
WWE SmackDown Vs Raw 2008	159	88%
WWE SmackDown Vs Raw 2009	173	74%
WWE SmackDown Vs Raw 2010	185	77%
WWE SmackDown Vs Raw 2011	199	63%
WWE '12	212	50%
X-Blades	178	54%
X-Men Destiny	211	35%
X-Men Origins: Wolverine	179	71%
Yakuza: Dead Souls	216	60%
Yakuza 3	191	80%
Yakuza 4	203	79%
Yoostar 2: In The Movies	204	60%




PS STORE LISTING



1942: Joint Strike	170	74%
3-On-3 NHL Arcade	177	62%
After Burner Climax	193	91%
Classic, frantic and utterly brilliant arcade action from Sega. A fine example of what the company is best known for.		
Age Of Booty	172	81%
Alien Breed: Impact	196	80%
Alien Breed 2: Assault	201	82%
Alien Breed 3: Descent	204	61%
All Zombies Must Die!	214	64%
Amy	215	19%
Anarchy: Rush Hour	194	73%
Aqua Panic	193	68%
Arc The Lad	215	79%
Armageddon Riders	207	65%
Back To The Future: It's About Time	204	71%
Battlefield 1943	182	89%
Beat Hazard Ultra	213	79%
Beat Sketcher	201	85%
Beyond Good & Evil HD	207	86%
Bishi Bashi Special!	175	61%
Bionic Commando Rearmed	169	88%
Bionic Commando Rearmed 2	203	61%
Blacklight: Tango Down	200	64%
Blade Kitten	197	72%
Blast Factor	152	72%
Blokus	202	54%
BloodRayne: Betrayal	211	62%
Blue Toad Murder Files: The Mysteries Of Little Riddle Episode I	188	65%
Blue Toad Murder Files: The Mysteries Of Little Riddle Episode II	188	61%
Blue Toad Murder Files Episodes 4/5/6	193	70%
Bombberman Ultra	185	82%
Braid	188	93%
We had to wait quite a while, but time is what we have plenty of both with and for Braid. Simply brilliant.		
Burn Zombie Burn	178	85%
Burnout Crash	211	79%
Call Of Duty Classic	188	90%
It doesn't have MW2's polish but it's a great game both as a slice of history and in its own right.		
Calling All Cars	155	81%
Castle Crashers	200	88%
Castlevania: Harmony Of Despair	212	67%
Catan	195	85%
Chime Super Deluxe	203	80%
Comet Crash	186	84%
Comix Zone	210	62%
Command & Conquer: Red Alert	168	70%
Command & Conquer Red Alert: Retaliation	176	55%
Commander's Challenge	185	68%
Command & Conquer	175	44%
Cool Boarders	173	57%
Cool Boarders 2	175	31%
Costume Quest	199	70%
Crash Bandicoot	172	77%
Crash Bandicoot 3: Warped	174	82%
Crash Commando	174	80%
Crash Team Racing	170	79%
Crazy Machines Elements	210	71%

game	issue	score
Crazy Taxi	200	80%
Crescent Pale Mist	200	70%
Critter Crunch	188	91%
 This is yet another beautiful, cute and high-class puzzler on the PSN that works perfectly and is a joy to play.		
Crystal Defenders	184	48%
Cubixx HD	207	76%
Dark Mist	164	53%
Dead Nation	201	86%
Dead Space: Extraction	203	88%
Dead Space: Ignition	199	47%
DeathSpank	195	83%
Destruction Derby	01	80%
.detuned	186	50%
Digger HD	186	52%
Diner Dash	190	66%
Driver	171	90%
Droplitz	184	91%
Earthworm Jim HD	196	89%
Eat Them!	202	60%
echochrome II	202	83%
echochrome	169	85%
Elefunk	170	45%
Euforia	212	85%
ExploDemom	203	70%
Fat Princess	183	65%
Fatal Inertia EX	168	65%
FIFA 09 Ultimate Team	178	61%
Final Fight: Double Impact	193	90%
 This scrolling-fighter classic from 1989 makes an almost faultless appearance on PSN. Stick it on your download list!		
Final Fantasy VII	181	96%
 Even after all these years it still holds up. In fact, our mark seems to have gone up 3% since 1997		
Final Fantasy VIII	190	90%
Final Fantasy IX	195	90%
Flight Control HD	198	85%
Flock!	179	70%
fIOW	151	90%
 Another 90% game for the PS3, another lesson in simple, addictive gameplay. fIOW is an innovative title available on the Network.		
Flower	176	85%
Frogger Returns	190	35%
From Dust	211	82%
Funky Lab Rat	201	70%
G-Police	27	84%
Galaxy Fight	215	27%
Gatling Gears	207	62%
Geon	175	71%
Go! Puzzle	152	58%
God Hand	216	83%
Gotham City Impostors	216	78%
Gran Turismo HD	150	75%
Gravity Crash	187	85%
Greed Corp	191	75%
GTI Club+	174	72%
Gundemonium Collection	197	80%
Gunstar Heroes	181	85%
Hamsterball	194	72%
Hardcore 4x4	15	81%
Hasbro Family Game Night	187	60%
Heavy Weapon	187	75%
High Velocity Bowling	163	50%
Hi-Octane	178	64%
Hustle Kings	190	87%
Hyperballoid HD	188	70%
I Am Alive	217	64%
inFamous: Festival Of Blood	212	76%
Inferno Pool	181	81%
International Track & Field	171	80%
Interpol: The Trail Of Doctor Chaos	185	48%
Invincible Tiger: The Legend Of Han Tao	185	70%
Jet Rider 2	176	71%
Joe Danger	194	96%
 Simply put, Joe Danger is one of the best games you'll currently find on the PSN. Buy it. Buy it now.		
Journey	216	87%
Judge Dredd	18	19%
Jumping Flash	172	55%
Jurassic Park: The Game	214	32%
Kick-Ass The Game	194	60%

game	issue	score
Kula World	172	71%
Kung-Fu Live	201	42%
Landit Bandit	195	66%
Lara Croft And The Guardian Of Light	198	90%
 Lara is back to her best in The Guardian Of Light. Tomb Raider fans will love it and for just £9.99 everyone else should, too.		
Lead & Gold: Gangs Of The Wild West	193	65%
Lemmings	151	79%
Limbo	209	90%
 We had to wait a while, but just like with Braid it in no way negatively impacts the quality of what is just that – a quality experience.		
Linger In Shadows	173	69%
LocoRoco Cocoreccho!	159	80%
Lumines Supernova	178	90%
Madden NFL Arcade	188	58%
Magic Carpet	179	65%
Magic: The Gathering: Duels Of The Planeswalkers	202	84%
Magic: The Gathering: Duels Of		
The Planeswalkers 2012	208	70%
Marvel Vs Capcom 2	182	90%
Matt Hazard: Blood Bath And Beyond	189	69%
Medal Of Honor: Frontline	210	52%
MediEvil	173	45%
Mega Man 9	172	75%
Mega Man 10	192	82%
Metal Gear Solid	187	93%
 While it looks rather rough now, the game itself remains a real high point in the franchise. Simply essential.		
Metal Gear Solid Online	175	45%
Microbot	202	51%
Monkey Island 2: Special Edition	195	94%
Motorhead	173	60%
Namco Museum Essentials	193	60%
Naruto Shippuden: Kizuna Drive	205	42%
NBA Jam: On Fire Edition	212	64%
Noby Noby Boy	177	85%
Nucleus	155	82%
Numblast	183	60%
N20	37	70%
Oddworld: Stranger's Wrath HD	214	86%
Outland	207	72%
OutRun Online Arcade	180	80%
Pac-Man Championship Edition DX	201	91%
 Bold, bright, insanely addictive – this re-imagining of the retro classic is an essential addition to anybody's PSN library		
Payday: The Heist	213	88%
Pain	183	69%
Peggle	189	94%
Pinballistik	215	75%
PixelJunk Eden	169	67%
PixelJunk Monsters	163	94%
PixelJunk Shooter	187	93%
PixelJunk Shooter 2	204	90%
 If you like challenges, shooting, pixels and junk, then this combines all four of those and adds in several splashes of style as well.		
PixelJunk SideScroller	213	77%
Piyotama	162	62%
Planet Minigolf	196	58%
Polar Panic	190	65%
Populous: The Beginning	46	70%
Prince Of Persia Classic	173	67%
Puddle	216	76%
Puzzle Chronicles	194	70%
Puzzle Dimension	208	81%
Puzzle Quest Galactrix	181	68%
Q*bert	58	53%
Rag Doll Kung Fu: Fists Of Plastic	179	83%
Rampage: World Tour	29	77%
Ratchet & Clank: Quest For Booty	170	69%
Rayman	01	76%
Rayman 3 HD	217	77%
Renegade Ops	211	78%
Resident Evil 4 HD	210	93%
 One of the best games ever made comes to PSN. Unfortunately it also brings with it a rather high price tag		
Resident Evil Code Veronica X	211	72%
Revenge Of The Wounded Dragons	191	60%
Riff: Everyday Shooter	162	86%
Risk: Factions	202	80%
Rocketbirds: Hardboiled Chicken	212	82%
Rocket Knight	194	74%

game	issue	score
Rocketmen: Axis Of Evil	165	63%
Sam & Max: The Devil's Playhouse Episode 1	194	90%
Sam & Max: The Devil's Playhouse Episode 2	194	92%
 This is even better than the first episode due to the fact it has better puzzles and even funnier dialogue.		
Sega Rally Online Arcade	208	74%
Savage Moon	175	87%
Scott Pilgrim Vs The World	197	77%
Section 8	193	78%
Section 8: Prejudice	209	80%
Shank	197	86%
Shatter	183	91%
Sheep	171	78%
Shoot Many Robots	217	81%
Siren Blood Curse	170	62%
Smash Cars	184	50%
SOCOM Confrontation	178	55%
Soldner-X 2: Final Prototype	195	70%
Sonic 4: Episode One	199	82%
Sonic Adventure	198	63%
Sonic CD	214	82%
Spin Jam	174	32%
Snakeball	176	92%
Stacking	203	88%
Star Trek: D-A-C	189	57%
Street Fighter Alpha: Warrior's Dream	159	57%
Street Fighter III: 3rd Strike Online Edition	209	92%
 The best version of one of the best fighting games ever released, or something. We don't know, mainly because Ryan isn't writing this.		
Street Skater 2	178	40%
Super Puzzle Fighter II HD Turbo Remix	168	78%
Super Rub-A-Dub	151	83%
Supersonic Acrobatic Rocket-Powered Battle-Cars	177	65%
Super Stardust HD	155	74%
Super Street Fighter II Turbo HD Remix	176	72%
Switchball	191	75%
Swords And Soldiers	199	88%
Syphon Filter	48	93%
Syphon Filter 3	170	80%
Tales Of Monkey Island	196	91%
Tank Battles	186	68%
Tekken HD	150	80%
Tekken 5: Dark Resurrection Online	161	87%
Tetris	202	84%
The Baconing	210	72%
The Last Guy	171	91%
The Punisher: No Mercy	182	49%
The Secret Of Monkey Island Special Edition	195	92%
 LucasArts' classic point-and-click adventure gets an HD makeover and will hopefully be the first of many classics heading to PSN.		
The Simpsons: Arcade Game	216	54%
Theme Hospital	32	80%
Theme Park	174	80%
TMNT: Turtles In Time Re-shelled	186	57%
Tom Clancy's Rainbow Six	54	34%
Top Darts	202	71%
Top Gun	198	53%
Topotai: Spinning Through The Worlds	183	61%
ToyHome	162	31%
Trash Panic	181	79%
Trials Of Topaq	159	50%
Trine	184	85%
Tumble	198	70%
Under Siege	207	71%
Uno	189	85%
Vagrant Story	189	82%
Vandal Hearts: Flames Of Judgment	192	87%
Wakeboarding HD	192	65%
Warhawk: Operation Fallen Star	171	80%
Watchmen: The End Is Nigh	183	55%
Who Wants To Be A Millionaire?	214	79%
Wipeout	01	89%
Wipeout HD	172	84%
Wolfenstein	181	70%
Worms	179	91%
Worms 2: Armageddon	198	87%
Worms Battle Islands	201	80%
Worms Crazy Golf	213	82%
Worms: Ultimate Mayhem	217	80%
X-Men Arcade	203	60%
Yar's Revenge	206	57%
Zack Zero	215	73%
Zombie Apocalypse: Never Die Alone	213	69%
Zuma	182	78%

PS3'S BEST GAMES

DEAD SPACE 2

92%, PLAY 201



At the time of writing this we're preparing to hear something official about *Dead Space 3*, which brings us back to the heady days of early 2011. January, the forgotten month, where games are usually sent to die. Well, unless they're *Dead Space 2*.



It seems that *Dead Space 2* has been relegated to the back of many people's minds, dismissed as any other forgettable game and left to die alone in a ditch. Well, not that dramatic, but it seems people have generally forgotten about the game.



But it shouldn't be forgotten. It shouldn't be ignored. It should be remembered fondly for being a great, fun game. Not survival horror per se, but full of enough jumps and genuinely disconcerting moments to stretch beyond mere action-shootiness.



Even the multiplayer is half-decent – comparable to *Mass Effect 3*'s fun, but ultimately forgettable online mode. It was a welcome addition but we did have to question the emphasis placed on the mode in pre-release hype. SP is where it's at.



And so it is we put our flag in the ground and stand by our proclamation: *Dead Space 2* is one of the best games available on PS3. And you can probably get it for a pittance these days too, which is doubly nice.

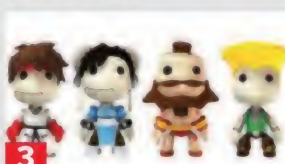
TOP TEN SACKBOY COSTUMES



1
Old Snake



2
Nathan Drake



3
Street Fighter



4
Patapon



5
Ezio Auditore Da Firenze



6
Santa



7
Sephhiroth



8
Nariko



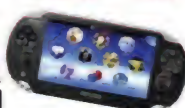
9
Killzone



10
Watchmen

game issue score

PS VITA LISTING



A-Men	217	70%
Army Corps Of Hell	217	64%
Everybody's Golf	215	86%
BlazBlue: Continuum Shift Extend	216	85%
Escape Plan	216	81%
FIFA Football	216	80%
Hustle Kings	216	81%
Little Deviants	215	69%
Lumines Electric Symphony	216	85%
MotorStorm RC	217	81%
ModNation Racers: Road Trip	215	59%
Ninja Gaiden Sigma Plus	217	72%
Rayman Origins	216	84%
Reality Fighters	215	52%
Ridge Racer	216	48%
Super Stardust Delta	216	84%
Touch My Katamari	216	83%
Ultimate Marvel Vs Capcom 3	216	80%
Uncharted: Golden Abyss	215	83%
Unit 13	216	67%
Virtua Tennis 4: World Tour Edition	215	81%
WipEout 2048	215	87%

PSP LISTING



300: March To Glory	152	59%
Ace Combat X	147	72%
Ace Combat: Joint Assault	194	79%
After Burner: Black Falcon	152	82%
Ape Academy 2	145	52%
Ape Escape P	140	37%
Army Of Two: The 40th Day	190	45%
Assassin's Creed: Bloodlines	187	77%
Astonishia Story	142	68%
Beaterator	186	72%
Blade Dancer: Lineage Of Light	145	45%
BlazBlue: Calamity Trigger Portable	194	84%
Blood Bowl	184	53%
Bombberman	150	83%
Boulder Dash: Rocks!	165	69%
Breath Of Fire III	138	82%
Brothers In Arms: D-Day	149	69%
Burnout Dominator	153	65%
Burnout Legends	134	94%
Buzz! Brain Bender	175	68%
Capcom Classics Collection Reloaded	147	80%
Capcom Classics Collection Remixed	141	72%
Cars	143	60%
Castlevania: The Dracula X Chronicles	163	78%
Championship Manager	137	65%
Championship Manager 2006	140	32%
Cid The Dummy	180	32%
Coded Arms	134	53%
Call Of Duty: Roads To Victory	153	69%
Colin McRae Rally 2005 Plus	134	84%
Crisis Core - Final Fantasy VII	167	87%
Crush	154	80%
Dante's Inferno	191	76%
Dead Or Alive: Paradise	192	56%
Disgaea: Afternoon Of Darkness	161	92%
Dissidia: Final Fantasy	184	60%
Dissidia 012 Final Fantasy	203	79%
Disgaea 2: Dark Hero Days	190	87%
Dragon Ball Z: Shin Budokai 2	154	50%
Driver 76	154	68%
Dungeons & Dragons: Tactics	159	55%
Dungeon Siege: Throne Of Agony	148	85%
Dynasty Warriors: Strikeforce	179	69%
EA Replay	147	74%
echochrome	169	85%
echoshift	191	73%
Everybody's Golf 2	167	86%
Everybody's Tennis	195	88%
Every Extend Extra	145	84%
Exit	138	65%
EyePet	199	77%
F1 2009	187	66%
Field Commander	145	83%
FIFA 06	136	43%
FIFA 07	147	81%
FIFA 11	198	69%
FIFA World Cup 2010	193	65%
Fired Up	134	60%
Final Fantasy	164	63%

*denotes import review

game issue score

Final Fantasy IV: The Complete Collection	204	80%
Final Fantasy Tactics	159	86%
FlatOut: Head On	164	79%
Football Manager 2007	147	62%
Football Manager Handheld 2008	161	49%
Football Manager Handheld 2010	187	60%
Formula One 06	143	78%
Frantix	136	36%
Gangs Of London	144	65%
Ghost Recon Advanced Warfighter 2	157	42%
Ghost Recon Predator	200	60%
Ghostbusters: The Video Game	188	55%
Ghostbusters: Sanctum Of Slime	204	51%
Gitaroo Man Lives!	144	79%
Gladiator Begins	206	52%
Go! Sudoku	137	45%
Gods Eater Burst	202	88%
God Of War: Chains Of Olympus	165	84%
God Of War: Ghost Of Sparta	199	79%
Gradius Collection	144	80%
Gran Turismo	184	85%
Grand Theft Auto: Chinatown Wars	185	95%
GTA: Liberty City Stories	135	95%
GTA: Vice City Stories	147	96%
Half-Minute Hero	191	87%
Hard Corps: Uprising	204	78%
Harry Potter And The Goblet Of Fire	136	69%
Hellboy: Science Of Evil	170	60%
Holy Invasion Of Privacy, Badman! What Did I Do To Deserve This?	186	73%
Hot Pixel	155	73%
Indiana Jones And The Staff Of Kings	181	60%
Infected	141	68%
Innocent Life: A Futuristic Harvest Moon	154	70%
International Athletics	170	40%
Invizimals	187	71%
Jak And Daxter: The Lost Frontier	187	59%
Juiced: Eliminator	141	70%
Juiced 2: Hot Import Nights	160	80%
Kao Challengers	137	60%
Killzone: Liberation	146	83%
Kingdom Hearts: Birth By Sleep	196	88%
Lemmings	138	63%
LittleBigPlanet	186	90%
LocoRoco	143	94%
LocoRoco 2	173	82%
LocoRoco Midnight Carnival	186	81%
Lord Of Arcana	202	65%
Lumines II	137	74%
Madden NFL 06	137	74%
Marvel Trading Cards	155	38%
Me And My Katamari	138	86%
Medal Of Honor Heroes	147	72%
Medieval Resurrection	134	53%
Mercury Meltdown	145	66%
Metal Slug Anthology	150	91%
Metal Gear Acid 2	138	92%
Metal Gear Solid: Peace Walker	193	92%
Metal Gear Solid: Portable Ops	150	91%
Miami Vice	144	82%
Micro Machines V4	142	71%
Might & Magic: Clash Of Heroes	205	84%
ModNation Racers	193	70%
Monster Hunter Freedom	140	81%
Monster Hunter Freedom 2	157	59%
Monster Hunter Freedom Unite	181	77%
Moon Diver	205	46%
MotoGP	146	75%
Motorstorm: Arctic Edge	184	72%
Mytran Wars	179	85%
Namco Museum Battle Collection	136	68%
Naruto Shippuden Legends	185	46%
Naruto Ultimate Ninja Heroes 2	169	46%
NBA Ballers: Rebound	139	61%
Need For Speed Undercover	175	57%
No Heroes Allowed	199	69%
OutRun 2006: Coast 2 Coast	139	93%
PaRappa The Rapper	155	88%
Patapon	163	86%
Patapon 2	177	87%
Patapon 3	205	81%
Patchwork Heroes	192	85%
Persona 2: Innocent Sin	214	65%
Pirates Of The Caribbean	143	52%
PixelJunk Monster Deluxe	185	86%
Pro Evolution Soccer 2008	163	77%
Pocket Racers	144	49%
PoPoLoCrois	142	71%
Power Stone Collection	145	88%
PQ - Practical Intelligence Quotient	141	52%

game issue score

Prince Of Persia Revelations	138	69%
Prince Of Persia: The Forgotten Sands	194	52%
Prinny: Can I Really Be The Hero?	181	80%
PSN Collection: Power Pack	173	70%
PSN Collection: Puzzle Pack	173	54%
Pursuit Force	134	83%
Pursuit Force: Extreme Justice	159	76%
Puzzle Chronicles	190	61%
Puzzle Quest	153	66%
R-Type Tactics	170	74%
Rainbow Six Vegas	156	78%
Ratchet & Clank: Size Matters	154	78%
Red Faction: Battlegrounds	205	78%
Rengoku 2	144	72%
Resistance: Retribution	177	76%
Ridge Racer 2	145	78%
Ridge Racer	132	91%
Rock Band Unplugged	181	92%
Rocky Balboa	150	68%
Secret Agent Clank	169	79%
Sega Mega Drive Collection	177	79%
Sega Rally	158	90%
Shin Megami Tensei: Persona 3 Portable	206	78%
Shinobido: Tales Of The Ninja	150	60%
Silent Hill Origins	160	87%
Silent Hill: Shattered Memories	190	52%
Slam Bolt Scrappers	204	73%
Smash Court Tennis	154	58%
SOCOM Fire Team 2	154	70%
SOCOM: Fireteam Bravo 3	190	71%
SOCOM: Tactical Strike	160	85%
SOCOM: US Navy SEALs Fireteam Bravo	140	69%
Sonic Rivals	147	70%
Sonic Rivals 2	162	35%
Soul Calibur: Broken Destiny	183	92%
Spider-Man 3	162	32%
Spinout	149	81%
Splinter Cell: Essentials	139	71%
Split/Second: Velocity	200	71%
SSX On Tour	138	76%
Star Ocean: Second Evolution	178	78%
Star Trek: Tactical Assault	148	59%
Star Wars Battlefront II	137	74%
Star Wars Battlefront: Elite Squadron	187	65%
Star Wars: Lethal Alliance	148	69%
Star Wars: Renegade Squadron	160	78%
Street Fighter Alpha 3 Max	138	70%
Street Riders	140	29%
Super Monkey Ball Adventure	142	54%
Swarm	204	78%
Syphon Filter: Dark Mirror	140	90%
Tekken 6	187	90%
Tekken: Dark Resurrection	143	92%
Tactics Ogre: Let Us Cling Together	202	81%
Tenchu: Shadow Assassins	179	71%
Tenchu: Time Of The Assassins	146	51%
The 3rd Birthday	203	80%
The Con	153	59%
The Cube	153	64%
The Eye Of Judgment: Legends	191	57%
The Godfather Mob Wars	136	66%
The Legend Of Heroes: Trails In The Sky	214	75%
The Lord Of The Rings: Tactics	136	66%
The Sims 2	137	71%
TNA Impact! Cross The Line	189	58%
TOCA 3	152	70%
Tokobot	140	79%
Tomb Raider: Anniversary	156	81%
Tomb Raider: Legend	140	72%
Twisted Metal Head-On	134	54%
UFC Undisputed 2010	197	80%
Ultimate Ghosts 'N Goblins	145	88%
Undead Knights	189	46%
Untold Legends: The Warrior's Code	140	59%
Valhalla Knights	158	49%
Valkyria Chronicles 2	196	87%
Valkyrie Profile: Lenneth	153	78%
Viewtiful Joe: Red Hot Rumble	140	82%
Virtua Tennis 3	152	88%
Warhammer 40,000: Squad Command	161	70%
What Did I Do To Deserve This My Lord!? 2	192	78%
WipEout Pulse	159	86%
WipEout Pure	138	91%
World Of Pool	156	43%
World Tour Poker	141	67%
World Tour Soccer 2	142	40%
Worms: Open Warfare 2	157	80%
WWE SmackDown! Vs. RAW 2006	137	84%
WWE SmackDown! Vs. RAW 2007	147	80%
World Rally Championship	134	67%



WHAT (have they been playing?):

MASS EFFECT 3

WHO (who are they?):

Ian Dransfield

WHY (was it chosen?):

Because shut up, I don't need a reason to play it

IT'S PROBABLY FOR the best that I wasn't handed reviewing duties for *Mass Effect 3* – our scoring system only goes up to 100, and I don't think you, the readers, would have been able to take us seriously if I had vomited 'TEN BILLION PER CENT' across the page. Yes, restraint is for the best.

Plus it means I've been enjoying the game on my own time, at my own pace. I can jump in and scoot around unexplored systems for a while, avoiding those dastardly Reapers and scanning uninhabited rocks for salvage. It's a non-stop rollercoaster ride, this life. Or I can settle down for a good few hours and just... make progress. Or, one of the best options, I can sit and just read through every single codex entry, because that's the kind of person I am.

I don't even dislike the addition of multiplayer, because it gives me an excuse to play the game even more than I have been. I'm well aware there's little need for MP, but I'm still glad it's in there.

So it's been a nice reminder that it's still possible to get genuinely excited about a game and utterly drawn in. Well, just like *Skyrim* did, really. Games are great, aren't they?

PLAYING THE PLAYLIST

What has the Play team been indulging in this month?

WHAT (have they been playing?):

DEVIL MAY CRY 3

WHO (who are they?):

Ryan King

WHY (was it chosen?):

Because it's amazing, duh

THE BEST THING about leaving home is, for the first time, you pick who you live with. Perhaps not 100 per cent true because Lindsay Lohan never did return my calls (who's laughing now, eh?) but point is, I ended up flat-sharing with two gamers. And I still had *Mean Girls* on DVD so, you know. Compromise. That's what adult life is about, right?

I remember when my flatmate bought *Devil May Cry 3*. The same flatmate who tried punching Dhalsim's fireball away in *Street Fighter Alpha III*. The same flatmate who fell asleep while playing turn-based *Pokemon Colosseum*, with full-on head-tilted back while snoring action, as Pikachu danced about onscreen patiently waiting for a button prompt.

It took two painful hours for him to beat Cerberus, the second boss. Two hours of dying, mumbled swear words, half-hearted 'I bet you couldn't do it' threats, telling us to stop laughing, telling us to f*** off. Neither myself nor the other flatmate understood why he kept at it. *Devil May Cry HD Collection* has made me realise why he never stopped. It's brilliant. It's a game where you never stop learning, even in defeat. Surprisingly, it reminds you of *Dark Souls*. Oh, and I beat Cerberus first time.

In your bloody face, Tim.



PS3'S BEST GAMES IF YOU LIKE...



Very, VERY loud guns

PLAY: SYNDICATE

Syndicate does get a few things right, and one of them is abso-totally the guns. When you fire these bad boys, they stay fired. The one problem with them is they're so bloody loud and chunky and all like BANG and stuff it can get a bit overwhelming.



Tinkering with your toys

PLAY: ARMORED CORE V

Armored Core V isn't the best game and it certainly doesn't have widespread appeal. What it does have is the right hook for those of us who like to tinker with our giant stompy robots. Good golly gosh does it ever have that hook...



Punching everything

PLAY: ASURA'S WRATH

Cool as it would be to know a god, we're not sure being on personal terms with Asura would be all that great. After all, he'd just go about punching the crap out of everything and being angry all the time.



Not quite being Solid Snake

PLAY: SYPHON FILTER

It's old news, but it still makes us chuckle: oh Gabe Logan, you're just not Solid Snake. We love you for it, we do, but you're just not as wonderful and brilliant as the Kojima creation. Even your name is dumber. Somehow.



Weeping about bad endings

PLAY: FIFA/PES

Busy crying about *Mass Effect 3*'s ending? Play something with no end, like *FIFA* or *PES*. That way you can never be let down by how something finishes, because... it doesn't.



THE DARKNESS II

WHAT OTHERS SAID

DID YOU PICK UP THE DARKNESS II? DID YOU ENJOY IT? YES? NO? IF YOU DIDN'T BUY IT, WHY NOT?

WHAT WE SAID

PLAY 215
"Even though it's less daring, challenging and memorable than its predecessor, *The Darkness II* is certainly not a terrible game. "Digital Extremes has taken Starbreeze's ideas and shaped them into its own experience; one that's anarchic and bloody and exhilarating in a way that realistic military shooters can never be."

76%

metacritic

79
out of 100



CHARLIE DAVIS: Don't follow age ratings. And I didn't get it 'cause I can't find anywhere where they're selling it.

JOSH HEMMING: I heard that it isn't that good.

DANIEL 'DRAKE' GOUGH: The demo was enough to sway my interest away from it.

KEVIN WILLIAM SMITH: Played the first one and thought it was kinda crappy. Also hated the incredibly long load screens before each level.

JOHN MURRAY: Dug up the first one out of the attic in anticipation, just to give it a run through before the second game came out. I was quite fond of *The Darkness* back in the day. I remember being hugely impressed at the time. But it has aged terribly. So I didn't fancy seconds.

JOHN MURRAY: Jackie's a bit of a dick too, in fairness.

ASH TULETT: I love it! Having said that I do read the comics... But even so, it's well worth a playthrough for the dual wielding and great story. My one complaint is that it felt a little short, it could have done with an extra hour or so.



@HANKBIZZLE: Not picked it up, not really interested in it at all. Story seemed a bit stupid.

@MR_MOOBS: Picked it up on release. Loved it, felt good ripping goons to pieces with my awesome tentacles again.

@STRANGER_UK: Loved it! Though not necessarily for the reasons I loved the first. New graphics were ace but linear gameplay was disappointing.

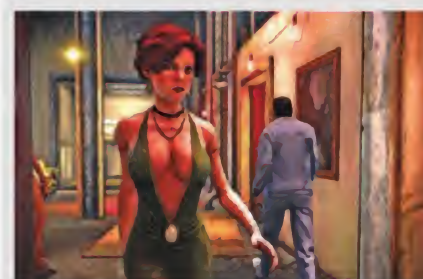
@METALPAUL1000: Really liked it. Very violent and easy on New Game+ with all the powers you feel like a god. Which is nice.

@X8FINITY: Haven't got it yet... too many great releases, that one's just fallen under my radar. I loved the first one, though.

@PROTAG22: I really liked it, thought it played well and had some inspired voiceover. Super fun, too!

@FENIXII: For me it was just a cheap FPS game. Bang, bang, move to another area. Then repeat.

@CHRIS1_9_80: I got it - love having the Darkness snakes to rip enemies to shreds very funny lol.



Post-Mortem

■ So it came to be that *The Darkness II* was, generally, well-received by the critics. But it seems the message just wasn't there for the gamers - mistrust of a rather divisive licence, an off-putting demo and... well, it just looked like another shooter. As a result the game probably did exactly as we expected it to.

But does it deserve to be forgotten, overlooked and ignored? Absolutely not. *The Darkness II* is a strong release. It's not 'triple-A' or whatever other phrase the suits have coined this week, but that doesn't stop it from offering a good time. Good fun. Good laughs. Oh, and ultraviolence to boot.

It turns out the multiplayer wasn't much cop, though. In fact, it was ignorable at best even if it did look to offer something of interest at first. Does this mean we're a world looking for FPSs that focus on online? Can a relatively straightforward single-player-focused shooter still succeed? Based on this evidence, maybe not.

But *The Darkness II* probably isn't the game to answer those questions. What it is, though, is a game that - for the reduced prices you'll be able to pick it up at just a few months down the line - is certainly something you should look to play.

PLAY

The Voice Of PlayStation
Gaming For Over A Decade

Next Month

Subscribe
page 74
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AN ISSUE!

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RESIDENT EVIL

Exclusive interviews reveal the secrets behind the monster series

PLAYSTATION 4

Ubisoft, Activision, Gearbox and more tell us what they demand in PS4

HARDEST TROPHIES

Find out how good at games you *really* are with our hard-as-nails Trophy checklist

WORLD EXCLUSIVE

METAL GEAR RISING

R E V E N G E A N C E

Issue 219 includes

FREE

PS3 DVD

OUR BIGGEST EVER!

PLAY

- MASSIVE EIGHT-PAGE BLOWOUT – FIND OUT HOW IT REALLY PLAYS
- HOT NEW SCREENSHOTS YOU WON'T FIND ANYWHERE ELSE
- EXCLUSIVE Q&A WITH PLATINUM AND KOJIMA PRODUCTIONS



On Your Free Disc

Highlights of your packed PlayStation 3 video hub



GTA V: EVERY BIG SECRET HUGE TRAILER ANALYSIS

The *Grand Theft Auto V* trailer is packed with hidden clues that most have picked out... but what about Pisswasser? The fast food? Vespucci Beach? We round up all the secrets Rockstar tried to hide and pick them out of the teeth of the debut trailer.



HD VIDEO TRAILERS

BIOSHOCK: INFINITE HIDEOUS NEW ENEMIES

Part of *BioShock*'s appeal is seeing what the overactive imaginations in their art department have cooked up and dear LORD, have they been busy. Four new enemies are shown off here – Handyman, Boys of Silence, Motorized Patriot and Siren. Which is the worst? You decide...

WATCH NOW: *Dead Or Alive 5*, *Far Cry 3*, *LittleBigPlanet Karting*, *Sleeping Dogs*, *Max Payne 3*



EXCLUSIVE FEATURES

TOMB RAIDER LARA CROFT EXPOSED

It might have gone quiet on the *Tomb Raider* front but not round here. We've put together a staggering 12-minute feature on Lara's latest, breaking it up into five different sections explaining why you should start caring about *Tomb Raider*.

THE INSIDE TRACK: Five Reasons You Should Care About – *Tomb Raider*; Trailer Analysis – *Grand Theft Auto V*; Worst Resident Evil Games Ever

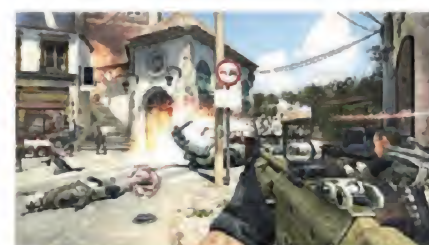


VIDEO REVIEWS

DRAGON'S DOGMA THE NEW SKYRIM?

It's barely the new *Risen 2*. We had our concerns with the AI and oh hey, guess what, the AI is broken. How broken, exactly? Our video review shows you.

REVIEWED THIS MONTH: *Dragon's Dogma*, *Ridge Racer Unbounded*, *Silent Hill: Downpour*, *Silent Hill HD Collection*, *Devil May Cry HD Collection*, *Resident Evil: Operation Raccoon City*, *I Am Alive*, *Shoot Many Robots*



VIDEO GUIDES

MODERN WARFARE 3 HOW TO DOMINATE DLC MAPS

Need to get ahead on *Modern Warfare 3*? Then watch our video, watch our tricks on the latest DLC map for Infinity Ward's bang bang shooter, try implementing our sniping tactics, fail miserably, email in and blame us. We'll take the blame. We're men like that.

GET AHEAD ON: *Call Of Duty* – DLC Maps Walkthrough, *Dragon's Dogma* – Cyclops Guide



KONAMI

SILENT HILL DOWNPOUR

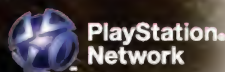
DISCOVER A BRAND
NEW HORROR
WITH SILENT HILL
DOWNPOUR

SILENT HILL HD COLLECTION

RELIVE TWO CLASSIC GAMES IN THE
SERIES, REMASTERED IN TERRIFYING HD.



PS3
PlayStation 3



XBOX 360

XBOX
LIVE

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KONAMI



A HIDEO KOJIMA GAME

TACTICAL ESPIONAGE ACTION

METAL GEAR SOLID

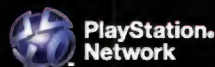
HD COLLECTION

FEATURING THREE METAL GEAR SOLID GAMES

METAL GEAR SOLID 3
SNAKE EATER

METAL GEAR SOLID 2
SONS OF LIBERTY

METAL GEAR SOLID
PEACE WALKER



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